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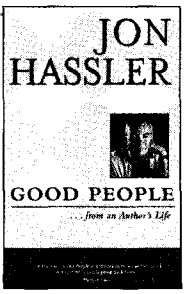

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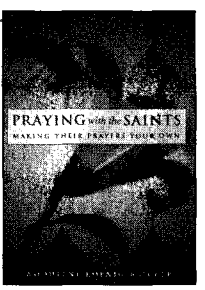

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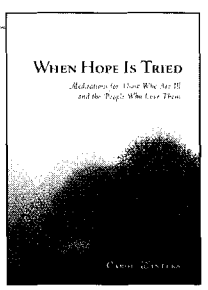

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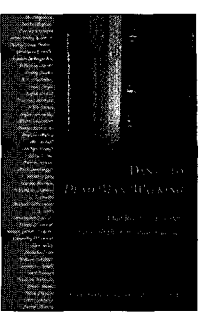

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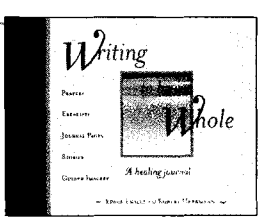

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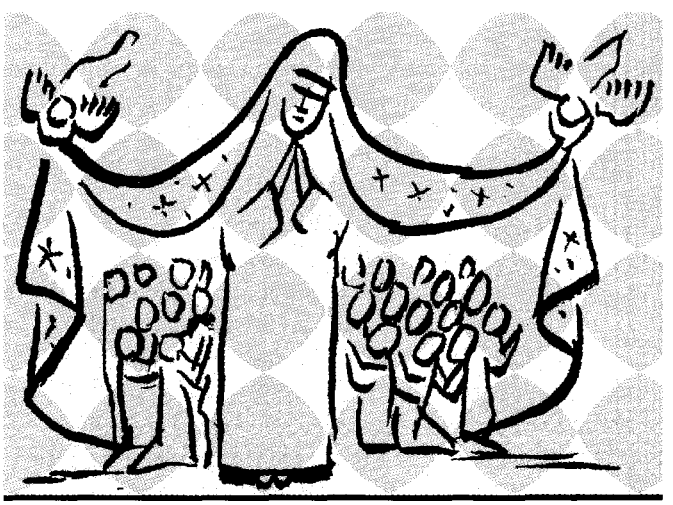

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To the Editors

Orientation, not behavior

Paul Baumann's examination of the Boy Scouts' policy of excluding openly gay scoutmasters ("My Son the Boy Scout," October 12) rests on a faulty definition of homosexuality as behavior. Homosexuality is an orientation, regardless of whether or not one chooses to engage in sexual activity. Most mainstream religious bodies, Catholicism included, consider sexual orientation an important and innate part of an individual's personality and believe that discrimination based on orientation violates a person's intrinsic human dignity.

The Boy Scouts' policy discriminates on the basis not of what people do, but of who they are. This issue is not one of sexual morality, as Baumann claims, but of social justice.

FRANCIS DeBERNARDO
Mount Rainier, Md.

The writer is executive director of New Ways Ministry.

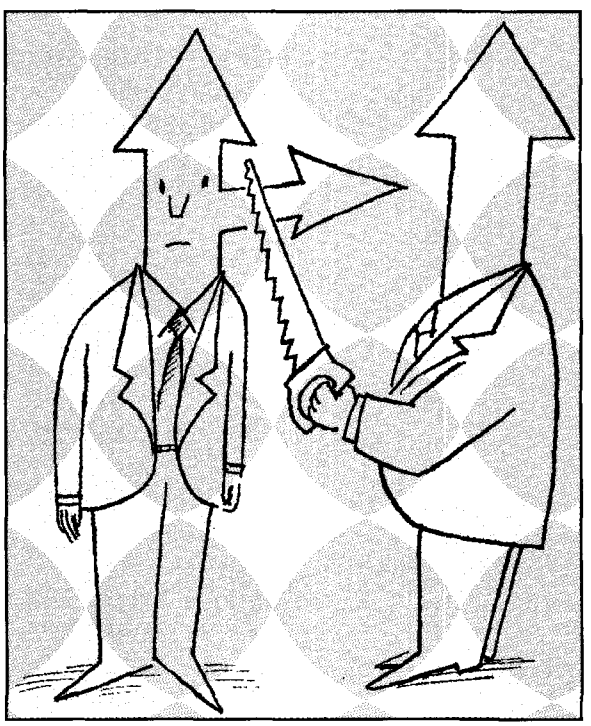
Morality test

Regarding Paul Baumann's October 12 column: As far as I am concerned, his "hesitation and fence-straddling" look no better today than do the past apologetics of Southern segregationists. It seems to me that the Scouts are focusing on the sexual identity of a person rather than his moral or immoral behavior. Is simply being homosexual immoral in Boy Scout eyes? Do they give their heterosexual scoutmasters a morality test? And, if they do, is the focus solely on sexual behavior? Do they include other behaviors they consider immoral? Perhaps they have an immorality checklist. Give me a break!

JOANNE P. BLAIR
Hamden, Conn.

Don't wait thirty years

I like *Commonweal*, I really do. But when you get around to gay issues, I become dismayed. In a recent conversation with my aunt, a Sister of Mercy for the last fifty-plus years, we talked about the fact that my dad, her brother-in-law, had recently come out as gay. She had been making progress with the fact that two of her nephews (my brother and I, to be specific) are gay, but this latest revelation seemed a bit much. The reason I mention all this is that in his latest column, Paul Baumann said word-for-word the same thing my aunt said. I figure if she can make some headway on how to think about gay issues, then so can he, and by extension, so can *Commonweal*.



In his column, Baumann writes the following: "For many religious people, the immorality of same-sex relations (and extra- and premarital relations, for that matter) is a question of basic sexual morality, not unmotivated prejudice." I'll take Baumann at his word that he is not prejudiced, as he seems not to be. As to what "basic" adds to "sexual morality," I will leave him to explain.

My problem is with the caveat always added by good, decent, religious folk (like my aunt and Baumann) when discussing gay issues. They think they are being fair when they relay how the church believes premarital and extramarital heterosexual activity is just as sinful as homosexual activity. Well, as I said to my aunt, I have no problem if you feel sex is good and right only within marriage. But since you don't think gay people can marry each other as straight people marry each other, and since the church believes celibacy is a gift some—not all—are given... You see where I am going here? Basically, gay sex equals premarital sex equals no sex since the church doesn't recognize the right (and the rite) of gay people to marry each other. So, please, don't conflate all of these things into one; it is confusing and doesn't help the conversation along.

Lest you think I am being too harsh about *Commonweal*'s stance on gays, let me add that Sidney Callahan wrote the best article on gay marriage from a religious perspective I have ever read ("Why I Changed My Mind," April 22, 1994). *Brava* to her!

As for Baumann, let's not wait thirty years for him to figure out where he stands on this issue. I might fall in love with Mr. Right and want to get married in the church in the meantime!

STEPHEN P. HAGERTY
Brooklyn, N.Y.

The author replies:

In regard to the letters of Francis DeBernardo and Joanne Blair, I believe the scoutmaster was dismissed because he became a spokesman for a university gay group and the Scouts thought that conduct incompatible with being a Boy Scout leader. Some-

(Continued on page 34)

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Homeland what?

Homeland security is a lexically challenging phrase as well as a bureaucratically challenging responsibility. The word "homeland" rests uneasily on our ears—evoking the language of Nazi Germany and apartheid South Africa—while the demonstration of it so far manifests a high level of homeland ineptitude. We do not dispute the fact that the nation faces unprecedented challenges. Nor should the difficulties of mounting a comprehensive response to the dangers of terrorism be underestimated. But even as we await a promised congressional inquiry into the intelligence failures of the CIA and FBI on September 11, the subsequent missed calls on anthrax in Washington seem to be of a piece with the bureaucratic infighting over bioterrorism that went on before September 11. Something is awry.

Tom Ridge, the head of the new homeland defense office, is a wonderfully serious and earnest presence before the TV cameras, but will he, any more than Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson or Attorney General John Ashcroft, succeed in building cooperation among the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the FBI, the Army, the CIA, and other federal agencies? Who would know that they all work for the U.S. government and the American people?

Germs: Biological Weapons and America's Secret War (Simon & Schuster), published just before September 11, recounts the bureaucratic infighting over bioterrorism within the federal government and foreshadows the ineptitude we have just witnessed. The authors, Judith Miller, Stephen Engelberg, and William Broad, report the repeated warnings from leading scientists, arms controllers, and State Department officials about the potential for a biological attack. Despite the keen interest of President Bill Clinton when in office, there was little cooperation among the several agencies given responsibility for coordinating a response to biological weapons of mass destruction. Even the personal enmity of Congressman Dan Burton (R-Ind.) toward Clinton spilled over into the effort, derailing the use of anthrax vaccine to protect the military. Among other items, the book also shows that a simulated biological attack with pneumonic plague in Denver, May 17–23, 2000, ended with the supposed disease raging out of control. The exercise showed that localities were woefully unprepared for a mass attack and that the federal government itself could do little to help treat or contain such an epidemic. Lack of coordination as well as years of underfunding public health agencies were apparent in Denver. We are not better prepared today.

Consider the postal workers in Washington. From what is now known, two postal workers died of inhalation anthrax on October 22 because the postmaster general was assured by the CDC that the envelope laced with anthrax and delivered to Senator Tom Daschle's office could not have contaminated the post offices that handled it. The CDC was wrong. In fact, the nation's chief disease fighters had not examined the anthrax spores themselves. The FBI, which had examined them, misinformed or did not fully inform the CDC of the spores' virulent quality. Clueless doctors and nurses at hospitals where the postal workers went for treatment diagnosed flu and sent them home. Unexpected crises produce unexpected tragedies; these two deaths are sad examples. But consider then, the im-

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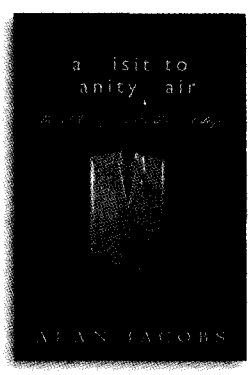

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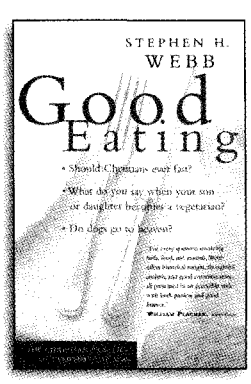

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mediate response in Congress to the anthrax: Close down Capitol Hill; test everybody who works there; and where exposure is found, provide prophylactic treatment. At the same time, hundreds of mostly African American postal workers are left unwarned and unprotected. This not only smacks of race and class bias, it confirms the suspicion that our politicians and their staffs are woefully self-interested—as self-interested as they often appear to be in managing the nation's political affairs.

Which brings us to the most recent and sorry examples of political chicanery. In the midst of the chaos caused by the anthrax shutdown, the Republicans forced through the House on October 24 the so-called economic recovery plan. Two weeks earlier, Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill seemed to dismiss the bill as "show business," but it is more than that: tax rebates to large corporations, more tax cuts for the best-off Americans, and a paltry subvention to rising claims for unemployment compensation by laid-off workers. Furthermore, despite their abysmal performance before and after the terrorist attacks, private companies are likely to retain the airport security business because Republicans refuse to federalize this responsibility. These measures, and others, show how far Republicans are from the bipartisan spirit that they have asked for and received from their Democratic colleagues.

The continuing terrorist threat has taken its toll on the economy, the national psyche, and the well-ordered running of the government. That has to change—and swiftly. If the Bush administration expects support, it cannot call for national unity while advancing the demands of a debatable economic ideology and the special interests to which it is beholden. If sacrifice is called for then fair and equitable treatment must be the order of the day. Postal workers and laid-off workers deserve better. So does the country.

ET CETERA

Soul searching ■ Keeping the faith honest, and ourselves honest about the faith, are *Commonweal* specialties. So, there was a notable lift in spirits here when "A Memo to American Muslims," counseling community "soul searching" in wake of the September 11 attacks, came to us courtesy of Internet forwarding. The memo's author is Dr. Muqtedar Khan. An Indian-born Muslim, Khan is director of international studies at Adrian College, Michigan, and a founding board member of the Washington-based Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy (www.islam-democracy.org).

Khan's memo lays out two specific areas for community reassessment: (1) American Muslims protest against discriminatory practices in Israel, but are silent on those in Muslim states. (2) American Muslims indulge in rhetorical excess when criticizing America. This combination of silence and hyperbole, in his view, has contributed to the "culture of hate and killing" that is "tearing away at the moral fabric of the Muslim society." Khan is one of many voices in the Mus-

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lim community counseling rhetorical temperance. But particularly impressive is his refusal of religious or political quietism. Khan believes Islamic resurgence, "the cherished ideals of which pursued the ultimate goal of a universally just and moral society," depends upon the embrace of democracy, including the vigorous expression of one's religious values in the public square.

Not only political analysis but political talk should reflect those values: "Our belief in Islam and commitment to Islamic values is not contingent on the moral conduct of the United States or Israel...We have to be morally better, more forgiving, more sacrificing than others, if we wish to convince the world about the truth of our message...The worst exhibition of Islam happened on our turf. We must take first responsibility to undo the evil it has manifest."

"A Memo to American Muslims" was published in *Ijtihad*, an e-zine on Islam and global affairs founded by Dr. Khan "to promote freedom of thought and independent thinking (*ijtihad*) among Muslims everywhere." It is available at www.ijtihad.org.

OF SEVERAL MINDS

PAUL BAUMANN

SCRUTINY & THEN SOME

The church & the Holocaust

David I. Kertzer's *The Popes against the Jews: The Vatican and the Rise of Modern Anti-Semitism* (Alfred A. Knopf) is the latest in a stream of books examining the role of the church in the Holocaust. Historian Marc Saperstein's review ("An Indictment: Half Right," September 28) did a superb job of explaining Kertzer's strengths and weaknesses. I've reviewed the book for the *Washington Post's Book World*, and last month appeared on a panel at New York University to discuss it.

I was apprehensive about participating in the discussion. Public forums about the church and the Holocaust usually draw a hostile audience in Manhattan. More anxiety-provoking, Leon Wieseltier, the literary editor of the *New Republic*, was to be the moderator. The *New Republic* is not known for its dispassionate approach to this question. Professor Kertzer would also be on the panel, along with *Commonweal* contributor Jack Miles and Columbia historian István Deák. Miles is the author of the Pulitzer prize-winning *God: A Biography*, and his new book, *Christ: A Crisis in the Life of God* (Alfred A. Knopf), has just been published. Deák is a longtime contributor to the *New York Review of Books*. His *Essays on Hitler's Europe* (University of Nebraska Press) is indispensable for anyone interested in this difficult subject.

As it turned out, the evening went well. Wieseltier was evenhanded, and did a fine job as moderator. I was asked to speak first, after Wieseltier had made a few remarks about the relationship between evil and religion and evil and modern secular ideologies. "It's a wash," Wieseltier argued, as to whether the forces of religion or explicitly atheistic regimes have been the source of greater violence.

My remarks were brief—probably too brief—but they seemed to get the discussion going. I wanted to make three points. First, Kertzer had done a brilliant job of refuting the self-exonerating claims made in the 1998 Vatican document "We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah." The Vatican had argued that there was a sharp line separating traditional Christian anti-Judaism from Nazi racial and "neopagan" anti-Semitism. Using the Vatican's own archives as well as articles from the Catholic press of the time, Kertzer demonstrates that the Vatican was a prominent source of anti-Semitic slander in the nineteenth century.

Kertzer is less successful in bringing to life the worldview of the nineteenth-century popes. Readers are likely to come away from the book with the impression that the popes and their henchmen were paranoiac, credulous, and driven by unmotivated hatred. How these men understood their duties and obligations, much less how their faith shaped the decisions they made, remains an enigma.

Finally, as Saperstein noted in his *Commonweal* review, Kertzer overreaches. The causal connection between nineteenth-century Catholic anti-Semitism and the Holocaust is never established, merely asserted. Kertzer states that "traditional Catholic forms of dealing with the Jews became transformed into modern anti-Semitism," but he never accounts for the influence of pseudo-scientific Nazi doctrines of racial purity, something essentially alien to Catholicism. Nor does he sufficiently acknowledge the impact of shattering events such as World War I and the Depression. In short, Kertzer's effort to link Nazism to medieval Christian bigotry does not give enough weight to the undeniably "modern" aspects of the Holocaust.

Deák, whose command of this history is encyclopedic, raised similar questions, always emphasizing the complexity of historical analysis. He also wondered aloud why so many books have been written about the Catholic Church's role in the Holocaust and so few about other, equally fallible institutions. Deak's unwillingness to accede to Kertzer's thesis earned him the lion's share of questions from the audience, all of which he answered, with great patience and authority.

Deák's question about why the Catholic Church is the object of such disproportionate scrutiny is one shared by many. I think there are several reasons. To begin with, the unfortunate effort to canonize Pius XII has focused attention on the issue. The continuity and visibility of the papacy also make for an inviting target. Nor is it surprising that critics are eager to debunk an institution that makes

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such large claims for its own moral authority. Moreover, there is no reason for anyone to accept the dubious historical assertions of the Vatican. Catholics should be grateful when such errors are corrected. Most important, perhaps, as Paul Elie pointed out in the *New York Times Magazine* several years ago (April 26, 1998), John Paul II's predecessors are now being judged by the human-rights advocacy of this papacy, and they inevitably fall short.

But there is a measure of bias at work as well. Notre Dame historian John McGreevy's essay, "Thinking on One's Own: Catholicism in the American Intellectual Imagination, 1928–60" (*The Journal of American History*, Spring 1997), is illuminating in this regard. McGreevy argues that Catholicism has played a crucial role in shaping the self-understanding of liberal intellectuals. For modern thinkers like John Dewey, Catholicism represented a subversive threat to fundamental American values involving democracy, scientific progress, personal autonomy, and secularization. In short, liberals instinctively defined themselves over and against Catholicism. At a deep level, Catholicism was seen as the corrupting and oppressive "Other." All you have to do is pick up a copy of the *Nation*, the *New Republic*, the *American Prospect*, or the *New York Times* to see how alive that ecclesiastical bogeyman is. Just the other night, a *New York Times* reporter on the "Jim Lehrer News Hour" described Osama bin Laden as "the pope of terrorism." You had to laugh even while cringing.

With our politics so dominated by abortion, questions of church/state separation, and the ongoing debate about the family, that enduring liberal suspicion of Catholicism has been given new energy. It is possible to see it at work in the enthusiastic reception of the work of Catholics such as James Carroll, John Cornwell, and even Garry Wills, who have all made arguments similar to Kertzer's. The church is far from perfect. By and large, however, it is no longer a force for obscurantism or reaction, but rather an advocate for human dignity and religious freedom. That fact is still "news" to many. □

OF SEVERAL MINDS

WILLIAM PFAFF

AN OLD STORY

Muslim-Western conflict

Behind the false idea that Osama bin Laden's attacks on the United States launched a modern war between civilizations is the historical reality of a real war between empires and nations that began with the Muslim conquest of Roman Jerusalem in 638. The Arab empire went on winning that war until the late Middle Ages, and then it began to lose.

Europe's Crusaders took Jerusalem away from the Muslims in 1099, but a century later the city was retaken by Saladin and, from then on, remained part of a vital and expanding Muslim empire that marched on Western Europe and very nearly conquered it. The Crusades were not a one-way street.

Arab Muslim power was imposed in Egypt and North Africa, onward to Spain and southern France, and through the Balkans to Vienna. Muslim civilization was at that time the equal or superior of Western Europe's by virtually every standard of military, political, economic, and aesthetic accomplishment. Had the French under Charles Martel failed at Poitiers in 732, had the Venetians and Spaniards lost the battle of Lepanto in 1571, or had the Austrians and Poles lost at Vienna in 1683, we might all be speaking Arabic today.

Even though the Arabs were eventually forced out of Spain, and parts of their North African empire became autonomous, they ruled the Balkans, or most of it, until 1914. It was only after the Ottoman Empire was defeated in World War I that the Arabs found themselves dominated by Europeans in a series of new states, set up under League of Nations mandates, in the former Ottoman territories.

The independent Arab and Egyptian governments that emerged after World War II proved another defeat. The supposed reformers of the Báath movement turned Iraq and Syria into hereditary dictatorships. Egypt became that anomalous modern phenomenon, the quasi-democracy, or consultative dictatorship.

Islamic society failed to take off economically, falling under the commercial control of Western oil companies, banks, and businesses. It remains technologically backward, under the intellectual domination of Western ideas and science on the one hand, challenged by a reactionary and utopian religious fundamentalism on the other. What went wrong?

Islamic society, the West's equal at the time of the European Renaissance, failed to make the transition to a modern society. In matters of material power, the Europeans passed from crafts and artisanal technology to empirical science, and eventually to industrial technology. They explored the world, establishing global systems of trade, commerce, and intellectual exchange. They experienced political evolution—sometimes violent—that limited monarchical power, empowered the middle and professional classes, and eventually produced modern liberal democracy. They developed institutions of law, adjudication, and contract.

The sophistication of Arab mathematics, astronomy, governmental administration, and military organization was very great at the end of the Middle Ages. There had been a remarkable philosophical flowering, and advanced theoretical science. The Arabs preserved Greek philosophy, transmitting it to Western thinkers. But they failed to make use of it themselves, as the Westerners did, to reform their institutions and to reestablish the basis of their political and social thought. Islam proved incapable of formulating a modern conception of politics and government, able to cope with a non-Islamic world much more powerful in material means, organization, and science.

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There seem to be two fundamental reasons for this, both of them religious in origin. The first was that religious and state authority were never fully separated in Islamic society, as they came to be in the West. Efforts to establish an intellectually legitimate nontheological basis for independent state authority have failed. This means that an independent civil society has never emerged. The West had a biblical basis for independent secular political authority in the distinction made by Jesus between the things that belong to Caesar and those that belong to God. Caesar was acknowledged the ruler of an autonomous political and social order. In 800, Charlemagne was crowned emperor of the Holy Roman Empire by the pope himself.

The second basic reason the West could create modern society was that from the Middle Ages forward, philosophy was distinguished from theology. Adopting Aristotle's philosophy of natural reason, Thomas Aquinas argued that reason is a source of truth independent of theological reasoning, and authentic in its own terms. He said that reason and religious faith are two harmonious but distinct intellectual realms. This was the historical basis for the independent speculative life of the West, which gave us the modern world.

Islam since 1914 has failed to make a serious intellectual response to the modern West. Culture and intelligence, not power, decide the quality of societies. This is the failure that has produced Osama bin Laden and his al Qaeda, and it is a failure more dangerous to Islam than it can ever be to the West. □

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Eileen Markey

MEMORY & WAR

London, the Blitz & the U.S.

London is abuzz with talk of war. It is featured in obscure movies on television. Its monuments fill a square in every neighborhood. The public conversation is imbued with pride at Londoners' bravery and steely resolve in the face of terror. Not this war of arresting Muslim suspects, freezing bank accounts, cobbling together a motley coalition. No, the last big one.

World War II is everywhere. And it's not merely *Saving Private Ryan* and *The Greatest Generation* nostalgia, although "Band of Brothers" has been airing on prime time all month. The British never stopped talking about World War II, because it happened here. Thirty-two thousand civilians died in London during the Blitz, and millions more lost their lives across the Channel in Europe. The city is crowded with reminders. And while Britain has been engaged in military actions over the past fifty years from the Falkland Islands to Kosovo, Britons seem more hesitant than their American ally to take up the latest call to arms. No, it's not a lack of bravery. It seems to be too much familiarity with war.

A slight hint of this reluctance was demonstrated October 8, when close to a thousand protestors gathered in front of Parliament under the gaze of a statue of Winston Churchill and a phalanx of bronze generals from campaigns past. Under a purple-blue twilight sky, their colorful banners stood in stark contrast to the white marble of the government district.

The opinions of ordinary Britons are more complicated than the "shoulder-to-shoulder" talk of Prime Minister Tony Blair. "I think people are very frightened and don't know what the answer is," said Jean Turner, seventy-one, a retired architect who opposes the bombing in Afghanistan. "I was a kid during the last war, and if you've been bombed, you don't ever want to bomb anyone," she said.

While Turner's involvement in the protest made her unusual, her stance is echoed by many less-vocal Britons. As in most of Europe, there is a general distrust of American intentions in Afghanistan. Is this new war really meant to root out terrorists, or is it a drive to reposition the United States in Central Asia, or a chance for President George W. Bush's hawkish cabinet to play war?

It is ironic that here, where sixty years ago the world learned the danger of avoiding war, people are again reluctant to step into the breach. Every war since 1950 has been fought to some degree with the justification that Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's decision to appease Hitler at Munich in 1938 must never be repeated. President Bush and Prime Minister Blair have couched this new war in those terms: Evil must be challenged. Ariel Sharon invoked the guilt of Munich when he rejected American entreaties that he stem Israeli violence in the occupied territories. The United States, he suggested, was appeasing Arab states. The Bush administration angrily rejected Sharon's implication. If Blair is haunted by Chamberlain, many of his fellow citizens seem to have digested the lesson of that mistake differently.

The British understand the danger of appeasement, but they also remember the terrible burden of fighting a war at home. They were bombed fifty-seven nights running in 1940 and twice war raged just across the Channel. The monuments that checker London not only commemorate soldiers, but thousands of ordinary civilians as well. The glimmering skyscrapers of the financial district replaced acres devastated by German bombs. While for Americans war has almost always been seen from afar, the British have had front-row seats. The United States has had the choice to toy with isolationism; Britain never has.

For many Americans, war can still seem a noble call, something done bravely and far away. September 11 gave an unwelcome taste of shattered churches, public morgues, checkpoints, and naked fear. That the British understand. □

Eileen Markey *is an American journalist living in London.*

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A CLOAK OF MANY COLORS

The end of beige Catholicism

Andrew M. Greeley

Catholics are different. We belong to a sacramental church and hence are a sacramental people, distinct from those who are less sacramental than we are. Since Vatican II, however, a type of false prophecy—based on an illegitimate reading of the council—has suggested that Catholics abandon these differences and become "just like everyone else." Such a mélange would not be Catholicism.

Any cultural heritage is a tool kit, a set of paradigms that suggests attitudes and responses to the problems and opportunities of life. Usually, such a heritage is subconscious and unreflective, which makes the problem of defining and describing it complex. Here I will try to examine contemporary Catholic attitudes and responses, especially toward what we have traditionally called the sacramentals.

Priest and theologian Robert Baron, born in 1960, says that he was raised and educated in what he calls "beige Catholicism," a Catholicism stripped of much of its beauty, its rainforest of metaphors, denuded in an effort to be "just like everyone else." Beige Catholicism is somehow trapped between the solemn but empty rituals of the past and a bare-bones, low-church Protestantism—not quite Catholic but not really Protestant either.

The issue is not restoration. The Catholicism of the forties and fifties cannot and should not be restored. Rather, the issue is whether the church, in its haste to adjust to the postconciliar world, jettisoned much of what was distinctive and precious in the Catholic sacramental heritage. Consider four examples of the church's discarded heritage: plain song, statues, the rosary, and meatless Fridays.

• **Gregorian chant** Plain song flourished for fifteen centuries. It has recently been celebrated in best-selling CDs. Yet liturgists have virtually banished it from Catholic worship on the ground that it has no place in the postconciliar liturgy. But to suggest that occasionally a congregation might sing the Kyrie, the Sanctus, and the Agnus Dei, perhaps in antiphonal mode with a skilled *schola cantorum*, does not imply membership in the Society of Pius X or rejection of the liturgical reforms of Vatican II. Rather, it is to advocate the recovery of a tradition of great beauty that has been part of the Catholic heritage for ages.

True, plain song is not of the essence of the Catholic heritage. It could disappear and Catholicism would remain Catholicism, albeit marginally the poorer. But if something is beautiful and hints of God's loving presence in the world, why abandon it? Why not sing the *Pange Lingua* on Holy Thursday?

• **Statues** My pastor in Tucson presided over the construction of a new church in which there were niches for only two saints, Mary and Joseph. In a lecture I gave there, I remarked that the pastor ought to have a storeroom full of saints, so he could trot out one or two to be saint-of-the-month. That way parents could bring their kids and tell them the stories of the saints, our stories of God's love. Catholicism is a religion awash in great and wonderful stories.

My monsignor, in giving his vote of thanks for my remarks, said, well, now, if Father Greeley wants to donate some statues, sure wouldn't we be glad to have them. So now when you enter Our Mother of Sorrows Church in Tucson, you'll find two life-size wood carvings of Saints Brigid and Brendan by Robert McGovern. More than that, there are Byzantine icons flanking the altar and statues everywhere, inside and outside of the church, and even a garden of saints in front of the rectory.

It might be said that all this "stuff" that used to litter our churches is not essential to Catholicism, not even really part of Catholic doctrine. They are accidentals, derivatives that have been added to the heritage over the centuries and are not important. God, Trinity, incarnation, church, pope—these are the essentials of our faith. However, such an argument confuses the way we first encounter our religious heritage and its stories with the way the doctrines are systematically arranged by theologians and catechism writers. Stories come first, then theological and catechetical systematization, which in turn enable us to critique the stories. But then, in what Paul Ricoeur calls the second naiveté, we return to the stories. Religion begins and ends with them.

• **The rosary** The monsignor in Tucson had so many

The Reverend Andrew M. Greeley *teaches sociology at the University of Chicago and the University of Arizona. He is the author of* The Catholic Imagination *(University of California Press).*

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people seeking instruction that he divided them into those who were already baptized and those who were not, an appropriate decision since the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults is technically only for the nonbaptized. (The baptized had their own ten-week course, "Faith Affirmation.") He discovered that many of the nonbaptized could hardly wait to get a rosary, because this was proof that they were really going to be Catholics. So he made distribution of rosaries an integral part of their preparation.

The Rosary! Hasn't that been banned by the liturgists? Isn't it a holdover from medieval superstition? Shouldn't we give up the nervous fingering of the beads of the grandmas and the babushkas? One of the great arenas for the study of comparative religion is the taxi cabs in American cities. One sees every variety of prayer beads under heaven. Why should we give up ours?

- **Fridays** We did give up fish on Friday, one of the great definitions of Catholic identity, and for no good reason of which I am aware. Most likely we were contemptuous of it as preconcilar. Despite the fact that some bishops think all you have to do to recreate a metaphor like this is to make a new rule, it won't work. A mentality has to emerge among Catholics that we do some things not because they are a rule but because, as Catholics, we like to do them.

Chant, statues, the rosary, Friday abstinence—none is essential, but until we find better metaphors for the presence of God's personal love in the world, we would do well to conserve what we have rather than toss them into the ashcan of history.

Perhaps the most powerful of all our metaphors is that of the Madonna. It would be difficult to find in the conciliar documents a hint that Mary was no longer fashionable, but, in sad truth, we hear little about her these days. This may be for fear that Marian devotion might offend our separated brothers and sisters. English historian Eamon Duffy has lamented that, in the last thirty years, theologians have written little about Mary. They ignore her the way Victorian novelists ignored sex. But why? Does she embarrass us? And why leave her to those who wish to multiply her titles or to those fixated on gnostic interpretations of private revelations?

And then there is purgatory. It has been swept away. In his wonderful novel *The White Hotel*, D. M. Thomas suggests that purgatory is a place where our task is to straighten out the messes we have made of our human relationships. This seems like a legitimate exegesis of the purgatory story, and a reassuring, encouraging explanation of its pain—which is also a joy. We can wisely pray for such souls—that they work through their problems. And we can ask their help in anticipating the pains and the joys of purgatory ourselves by striving for reconciliation in this life.

I offer this interpretation as one possibility. My point is that any attempt to take seriously the Catholic heritage that does not take into account purgatory (even if the name harkens back only to thirteenth-century Ireland) is gravely

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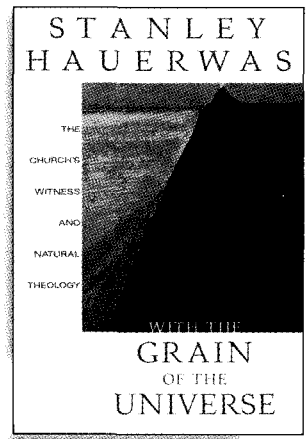

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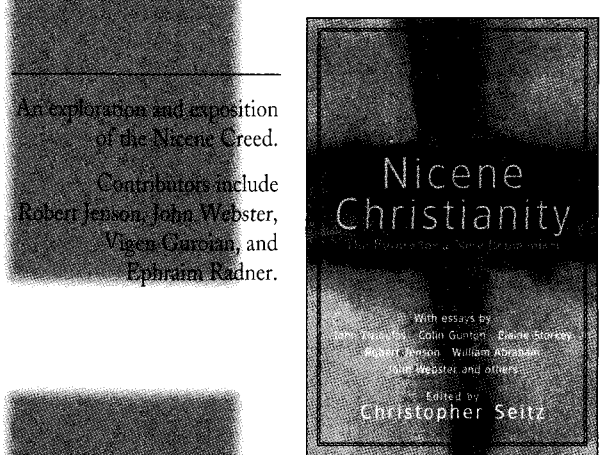

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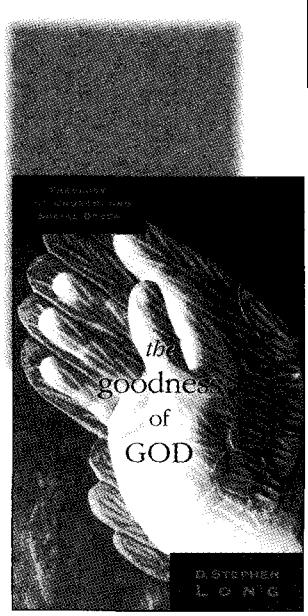

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Walter Jones's Orchard

To pick your orchard, you should have three things:
First, a good ladder; second, a bag that hangs
Around your neck, its bottom a trap door
Latched by a cord that when unhooked lets pour
The apples bruiseless into third, your boxes.

That fall, however, surprised by the expected
(For hadn't I in May admired the airy
Smother of blossoms, sensed everywhere
The tingle of bees after pollen, in August propped
Branches too weak to carry the promised crop?),

Out of boxes with half the apples to pick
I drove two hours north to load a truck
With the unused Eastern Standards of Mrs. Jones
(Little, quick, 70 maybe, living alone).
Walter, she told me, nailed together three hundred

From rough pine boards one year, and then he died,
Leaving them stacked in the barn. Where, I wondered,
As I wrote the check, was Walter Jones's orchard?
The farm was small; I saw no apple trees,
Though plenty of pines. A clever way to use

The trees he did have? Was Walter Jones surprised
Like me by the expected—or simply wise
Enough to consider boxes the prudent way
To start an orchard? Maybe his secret aim
Was to leave his soul in wood. For his widow to sell.

Walter Jones had built his boxes well.
No nail pulled, no side or bottom burst
To dump its load of Fancies in the dirt.
And now each fall when all the orchard's picked
My cooler's packed with Walter Jones's boxes.

Charles W. Pratt

deficient. For whom are we to offer our pains, whether suffering terminal cancer or a toothache? For whom are we to pray if the dead really cannot profit from our prayers? Do we even realize that a heritage which recommends and reinforces praying for the dead is a heritage which is both rich and benign?

A sacramental religion, one that believes in the presence of a loving God in God's creation, will inevitably become a heritage in which sacramentals abound. You may wipe them out as thoroughly as they have been cleansed from our churches on the ill-advised notion that only the altar, the ambo, and the font should remain. But once they have been eliminated, our people will invent new ones because we are a sacramental people. Our problem, therefore, is how to reinterpret and rearticulate our stories so that they represent the substance of our faith. Nine first Fridays on the record will not guarantee the presence of a priest when we need one. But celebrating the liturgy on those days will reinforce our conviction that God watches over us as beloved children in life and at the moment of death.

If we are to begin to retrieve the Catholic heritage, I suggest there are four dimensions we must consider.

- **The sacramental imagination** It has not completely disappeared from the lives of the faithful, no matter how little the church has tended it in the last third of the century. The task will be to raise it again for their formal consideration. This will involve becoming more conscious and explicit about what it means to be Catholic. For example, we make the sign of the cross with holy water when we enter a church to recall the graces of our baptism, to understand that God's love for us lurks in life-giving water, and to remind ourselves that we are entering a place where God is present in a special way. Most people know that or knew it once. But they need to hear it often. It is the task of our teachers in this time of transition to remind us that we are different because we are sacramental, and that we are sacramental *because* we believe grace is everywhere.
- **Discernment** We must discern what elements of the heritage may require more emphasis than others. Not every private devotion or pious custom of the past should be revived. Most novenas had run out before the council because there were too many of them, the prayers were too odd, the promises too automatic. But visits to the Blessed Sacrament disappeared because priests began locking up the churches, despite the fact that there are now adequate security devices which would permit the church to remain open for those who want to "drop in and say a prayer."
- **Explication** We must learn how to explicate our stories so that the risks of superstition, folk religion, and idolatry are minimized. Sacramentals are not instruments of magic by which we try to manipulate or control God. Lourdes water cannot compel God to cure someone, but it can be seen as a means of invoking God's maternal love. A votive candle reminds us of our ongoing prayer.

Recovering and rearticulating our symbols, therefore, is part of the task of religious maturation, of the journey from the "first" to the "second naiveté." It constitutes the phase of "criticism" when we unpack our symbols and then put them back together again, when we progress from the simple understanding of the child to the sophisticated faith of an adult. Perhaps one can say that today American Catholicism is collectively struggling toward the second naiveté.

- **Beauty** We must represent our sacramentality in ways that emphasize and celebrate its beauty. Of the three transcendentals—the good, the true, and the beautiful—the last is the first we encounter. It is, as John Paul II has said, the portal of God. It attracts us; we examine it and see that it is good. Yet in contemporary American Catholicism, the beautiful is not only the last of the transcendentals, it has become an appendage.

Whatever might be said of past practices—the Irish built schools and used the school hall for Mass—there is no longer

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an excuse for omitting beauty from our sacramental life. We need to elevate the functional with the kind of transcendent beauty that tears a hole in the fabric of ordinary life and allows grace to pour in. The minimalism of beige Catholicism desires only the commonplace.

In research on the persistence of religion in Europe, I discovered that religion survived most effectively where it was linked with a pervasive religious culture, a culture that had been shaped by it and continued to be supported by it. In my early days, a plague of French "religious sociologists" and their American acolytes dismissed American Catholic devotionalism as mere "cultural Catholicism." The implication was that to be authentic, religion had to forsake the support of a religious culture or subculture. For all their certainty, these sociologists misunderstood that religion is part of culture, and that the relationship between religion and the rest of a country's cultural system is never neutral.

My late colleague James Coleman developed his theory of social capital—the resources which inhere in overlapping networks—from observation of the overlap of neighborhood, school, and parish networks in Catholic parishes. He noted that there are more resources available to the community when there is such overlap. Somehow that never occurred to most parish priests and still doesn't. They may have heard of social capital, but they're just not interested.

Like all human institutions, the neighborhood parish has its built-in imperfections. Still, when properly led by a personally secure, sensitive, and open pastor, parishes generate levels of enthusiasm and commitment seldom matched in human community. The neighborhood/parish/school ought to be celebrated rather than be taken for granted, ignored, or worse, deplored.

In the euphoria of the postconciliar years, a spirit of "anything goes" became a spirit of "everything goes." The leaders of the church—and here I mean the hierarchy—provided little direction. In its absence, the instant experts—people who had read a book or attended a summer workshop—filled the vacuum. To this day, the architects of beige Catholicism and their successors seem to be in charge. The only opposition comes from those who want to turn back the clock completely, spin the altar around, put the Mass back in Latin, enshrine the tabernacle on the altar, and reimpose the law of Friday abstinence. Neither seems to understand what it means to be a sacramental people.

I would like to be able to report that there exists a program for the recovery of the sacramental heritage in American Catholicism, one that includes a pedagogical literature on how to achieve it, syllabi for classroom instruction, national conferences at which ideas and projects are shared. But nothing of the sort exists today. Instead, the inertial energy of beige Catholicism continues to plod unabated. At this writing I have to content myself with a modest plea that someone get to work to do something about it. □

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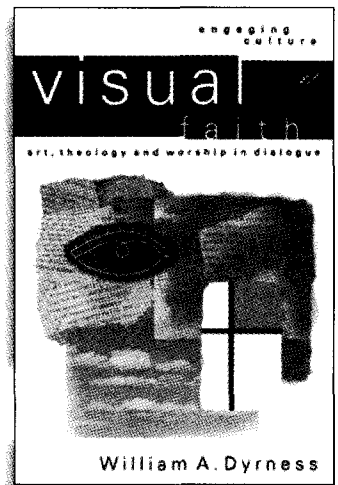

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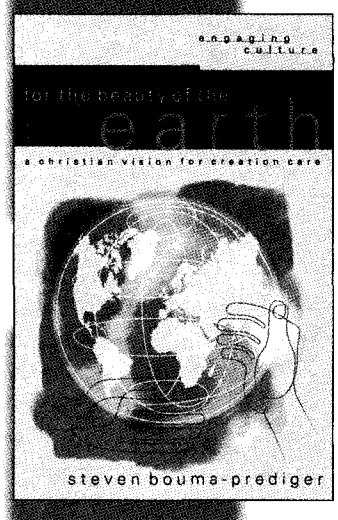

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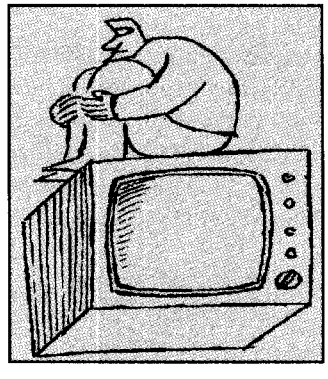
Richard Alleva

TV IN A TIME OF TERROR

The channels are changing

It was a hinge event. A door has been closed, a lock snapped shut. Everything taking place in this country before September 11 now seems part of a prewar golden age. (A delusion, of course.) The very date has already become a sort of catch phrase. And when a page has turned, a new era begun, people may rightly expect certain conditions and facets of everyday life to change, too. They may even expect showbiz to change, for escapist entertainment does not escape history.

Most of the fictional TV shows, even some of the news programs, throughout the next few months will be radically out of sync with what the American public (and much of the rest of the world) will be living through. Of course, so will many movies and novels, but no sensible person expects fiction, films, poems, and paintings to reflect indefatigably the news of the day. But we do expect this of TV because TV is translucent. When broadcasting news, it is a window on the world, and even its fiction is filled with references to recent events and current opinion. "Friends" and "Frazier" sometimes come across as comic illustrations of *New York* magazine articles about the foibles of urban life, while "Law and Order" quite deliberately rings variations on crime stories that appeared in newspapers mere months ago.



But, in the next four months or so, while the news shows may make TV more translucent than ever with their investigations of Osama bin Laden and their documentaries about Islam and the destruction now being rained down on Afghanistan, the fictional programs may come to seem irrelevant to the point of offensiveness.

I think of the movies released right after Pearl Harbor. While American wives and parents of early 1942 then had to worry that their husbands and sons would meet terrible fates abroad, they were being invited by Hollywood to also worry about Joan Crawford and Bette Davis finding love in *A Woman's Face* and *Now, Voyager*. Well, those parents and wives went to the movies anyway, and apparently were grateful for hours of distraction in the dark.

But the parallel between 1942 and 2001 breaks down in at least two respects. First, the old lightweight movies were genuinely lightweight. They were so far removed from reality that they didn't offend reality. One thinks of the Preston Sturgis film, *Sullivan's Travels*, in which a socially conscious drone of a film director learns that the prisoners on a chain gang get more relief from a good cartoon than they ever could from the collected works of Upton Sinclair.

But TV fare of the last fifteen years seems to be the sort of stuff Sturgis's hero dreamed of making before his epiphany. We now have comedy and drama bursting with topicality (AIDS, homosexuality, rights of privacy, child molestation) and latter-day realism (cuss words, close-to-graphic sex, hand-held camera work, etc.). Trouble is, too much of the topicality seems to be congratulating itself for just being there on the small screen, and too many "cutting-edge" episodes conclude with two people having heart-to-hearts at 2 A.M. in a well-appointed kitchen, then rising for an embrace that

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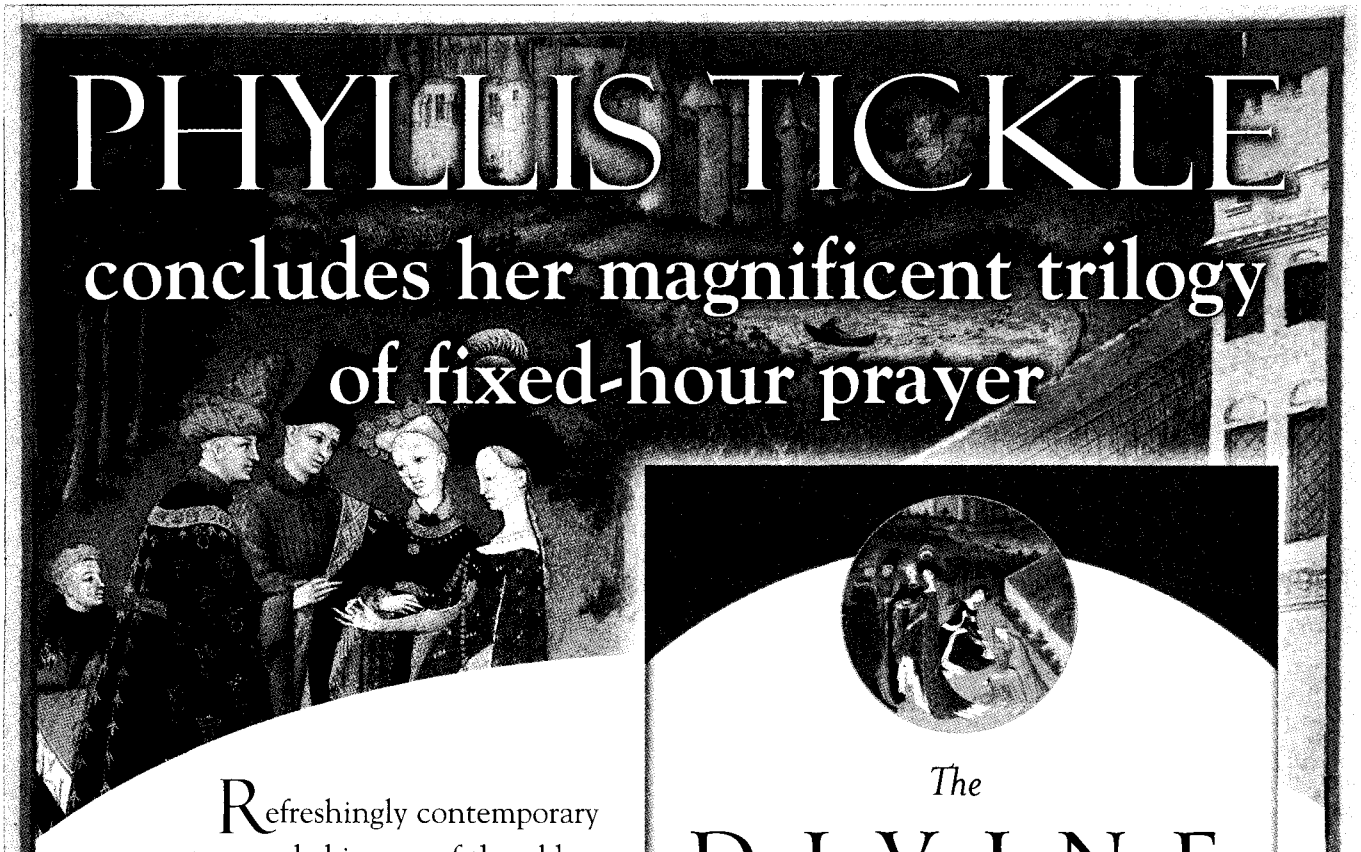

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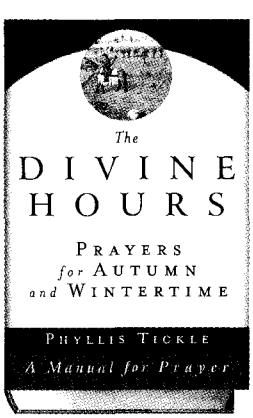

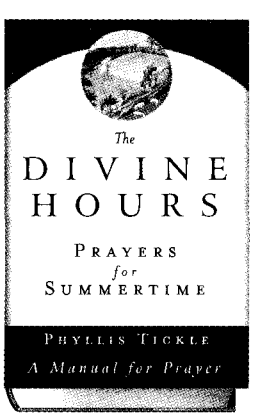

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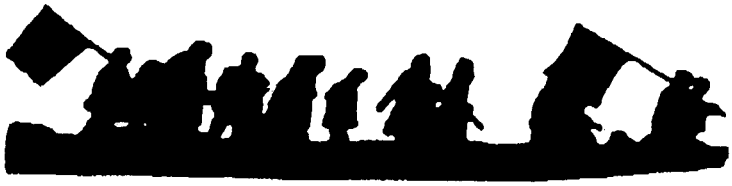

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- **What were the immediate causes of the atrocity of September 11th?**
- What were/are the root causes?
- **What will be the long term results?**
- How can we lead our faith communities into becoming centers of activism for world justice and peace?
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Second: during the last few weeks we have seen television as it has never been before. There on our tiny screens was an America struggling to tell America what America is. For instance, at the "Spirit of America" memorial rally, broadcast on CNN on September 23, you saw the one thing above all other American things that earns the wrath of the sort of medieval monomaniacs who planned the attack: the infuriating inclusiveness of America, the eternal American yes-we-include-you-too, the Whitmanesque embrace given by a country that says, "Come and become us and yet remain yourself. There's no real melting pot here to boil you. Your yarmulke or your yashmak needn't be discarded; they will become American things. Your kneeling to the east will become an American custom. Jehovah is American. Allah is American." The Buddhist sounding of Om during meditation is already American (thanks in part to a Jewish-Buddhist-homosexual New Jersey poet named Allen Ginsberg). The prancing little Hindu elephant god, Ganesha, will one day have a TV program such as Barney the Dinosaur's. The imam, introduced by Oprah and embraced by Mayor Giuliani, said it all when he intoned, "There is but one God. God bless America."

Watching this televised event, which employed the music and rhetoric of the civil rights movement, I couldn't help thinking that the terrorists are right to fear us, but they don't know how to do anything but aggravate precisely what they fear: the all-embracing, custom-exploding, ethnicity-diluting modernity of America.

After such spectacle, such nationally broadcast soul-searching and proclamation of identity, how are we to care about fifteen-year-old Molly of "Maybe It's Me" achieving normalcy when her "parents...are dizzy, grandma...hides food around the house, and her twin sisters...are terrors"? Or whether "a dot-com executive" can trade "the stress of big-city life for the comforts of her Hallmark-card hometown" in "The Ellen Show"?

The new television season has had to revise itself virtually on the spot. David Letterman dropped his irony act to express his horror, and his guest, Dan Rather, shed tears. Real tears on "The Letterman Show"! Mayor Giuliani showed up on "Saturday Night Live" to let producer Lorne Michaels and his cast know that there is always time for comedy. "Third Watch" dispensed with fiction for its season opener to present a documentary tribute to the real firefighters and rescue workers who gave their lives when the towers collapsed. "The West Wing" rushed into production a season opener that showed its fictional president coping with terrorism. And on every network and channel, as TV critic James Endrst reminds us, "episodes have been edited, movies have been pulled, premiers have been delayed—all in the name of sensitivity, a sense of decency, and an acknowledgement of the all-consuming psychological impact the tragedy has had upon the country."

It is right that this should happen and it would have been shocking if it had not. But, someday, after all the re-edited and delayed programs have been aired, could we have curiosity come to the fore as well as sensitivity and decency? At the "Spirit of America" rally, with its prayers led by Catholic and Buddhist priests and Protestant ministers and Muslim imams and Hindu holy men and Jewish rabbis, we saw in spectacular fashion a paradox, perhaps the chief paradox of America: a country, resolutely secular in its political underpinnings and increasingly secular in its cultural style, subsumes and depends on a population that still, in large part, looks to organized religions (sometimes very stern, exclusionary religions) for spiritual strength. If television shows were to begin to give us the comedy and tragedy of that paradox, a vitality and a variety might appear on our television screens worthy of an audience that has begun to treat day-to-day living as something more precious and more evanescent than it seemed before September 11. □

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Opposites detract

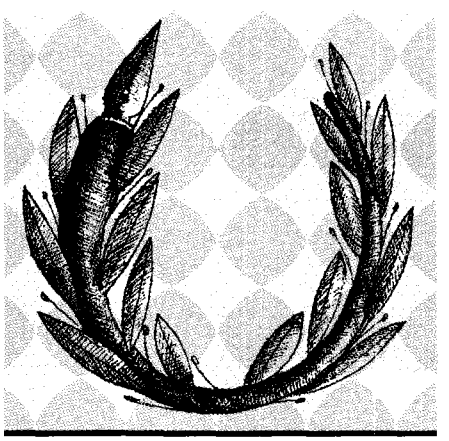
The Truth of Catholicism
Ten Controversies Explored
George Weigel
HarperCollins, $24, 208 pp.

Breaking Faith
The Pope, the People, and the Fate of Catholicism
John Cornwell
Viking Compass, $24.95, 307 pp.

Terrence W. Tilley

Both of these books will probably sell quite well. Their authors are craftsmen of English prose. The books brim with wonderful rhetoric. Both are manifestos "courageously" setting out solutions to the problems with contemporary Catholicism. The authors' recent books on popes are bestsellers: John Cornwell's controversial *Hitler's Pope* and George Weigel's hagiographical *Witness to Hope* on John Paul II. They would each find the position taken by the other to be the problem with Catholicism today. And that's the problem with them.

Weigel's book will be greatly appreciated by those who think that Catholics must sing in perfect unison as conducted by John Paul II. Weigel's technique is to string together quotations with his own nicely crafted prose: In 157 endnotes, there are 70 citations to the present pope, 13 to theologians Ratzinger and Balthasar, 17 to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and 13 to literary sources. Of the 17 citations to Documents of Vatican II, the majority are to the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*. Nothing new here. No controversies. No historical development. No room for other voices. Just THE TRUTH, eternally given in the present, glowing with certainty, a polished rock for beleaguered believers. We can climb out of the seas of confusion and find refuge from the storms of relativism on Weigel's Catholic Gibraltar: Belief in God is always liberating. The Virgin Mother is the image of the communion that is the church. The priest is an icon and, of course, women can't be icons of God incarnate. The moral life is one of virtue, but here are the rules (Kant would be delighted with this way of conceiving virtue; I am not so sure of Saint Thomas and Aristotle). Sex is wonderful, even liturgical—but only in lifelong, heterosexual marriage. Contraception is sin, but may be forgivable in confession even without a clear and firm purpose of amendment. Homosexual activity is wrong, and homosexuality is linked with AIDS (does Weigel still think this a gay disease?). Suffering is a good teacher and redemptive (really? always? for everyone?—I write shortly after September 11). Christ brings religious unity (tell that to the Muslims and Jews!). Making saints is an act of God, not of the church (the politics of saint making is, of course, irrelevant). Either buy into this myth, a "craggy world" of radical, saintly, extravagant self-giving, or buy into the brave new world of "rationally organized self-indulgence"! "Either/Or," but as written by a late twentieth-century bright-eyed propagandist, an Americanist Chestertonian.



Cornwell's thesis is that, despite all the great things he has done, John Paul II is leaving the church in a "dramatically worse state than he found it." The present pontificate construes constructive criticism as treachery. It is a Catholic Dark Age. The faithful are marginalized. There is a huge gap between official teaching and Catholics' practice and belief. The liturgy is in shambles. Cornwell rehashes disputes about the pelvic issues, abortion, homosexuality, nonmarital sex, etc. He notes a lack of participation by nominal Catholics. (Although the United States is often criticized on this point, by any measure the ratio of active to nominal Catholics in the United States is about four times that of Western Europeans, and the abortion rate in the country is a quarter of that of Eastern Europe.) He retails again the sorry state of the priesthood, the disgruntlement of laity, the increasing patriarchalization of the church, and the marginalization of women. (I hear a women's Country and Western chorus singing in the background, "Mothers, don't let your sons grow up to be clerics.") He rehearses some of the stories of Vatican disciplinary actions as crackdowns on independent thinking and creativity. He opines on the politics of sainthood and of the creation of Avery Dulles as a cardinal. The church of his birth, with which he broke faith for decades, and to which he returned before writing *Hitler's Pope*, is in the proverbial handbasket on the proverbial path.

Weigel and Cornwell seem to agree that centrifugal and centripetal forces are now tearing apart the church they each love. Weigel's solution is to return

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to the Eternal Truths of the present pope and to live obediently by the Rules as laid down by the divinely guided Vatican. Cornwell's solution is to soften the "my way or the highway" approach of Weigel's camp and to soften the discipline of the church while cleaning up the excesses of the liturgical reforms.

Those of us who are "true believers" in the present pope will cheer Weigel's book. And as a compendium of one strand of Catholic theology (a magisterial strand sounding all too hollow to many ears), it can't be beat. Those of us who are authentic hand-wringing liberals will find that Cornwell's book reminds us of what we rightly fret about. For a compendium of difficulties in the church, of errors made, and of suffering induced in believers, it can't be beat.

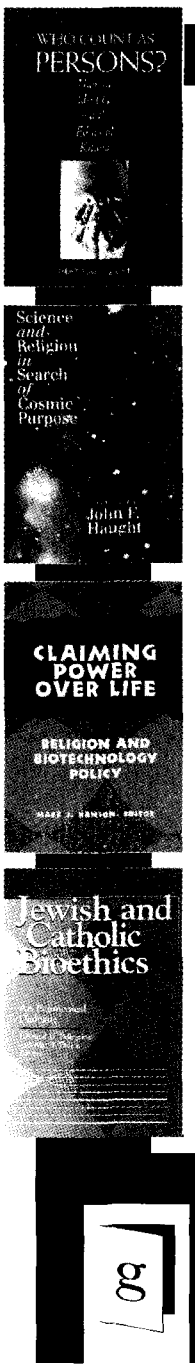
But the world is not as dark and bleak as Weigel suggests. Nor is the church so separable from the world. Neither is the church so dark and distressed as Cornwell portrays. Nor will watering down doctrine and discipline ease the problems.

Weigel rightly points out that the church is not a "denomination," which he identifies roughly with what sociologists call a voluntary association. If we follow his path, though, this big God-given church of and for sinners will become a narrow sect for the saved. Cornwell seems to want us to walk down a neo-Anglican path, with well-done liturgy and laxity in doctrine and morals, in effect to become a denomination. If we follow that path, the bark of Peter will lose all its moorings when still and its bearings when under way.

World Catholicism is a diverse *communio*. We strive to recognize a unity of prayerful faith in a diversity of cultural expressions. Globalization has given us instant communication that has highlighted more clearly than ever the diverse contemporary contexts in which we seek to live in and live out our faith. Historical investigations have taught us not only how wildly diverse have been the structures of our church and the expressions of our faith, but also how much the influence of the Christian tradition has waxed and waned in the lives of believers. We have only begun the process of recognizing that our faith is necessarily inculturated and that those inculturations, beginning with the church of Pentecost in Palestine, are truly and necessarily diverse. Despite our difference over time and space, we are in communion with the *pontifex maximus*, the great bridge-builder, and with each other in the *communio sanctorum*. If the church truly anticipates the reign of God, imagine how wonderfully and graciously diverse in practice and belief heaven must be! "Diversity" does not mean "anything goes," and "unity" does not mean that there is only "one true expression" of the faith—at least this side of the pearly gates.

Obviously, this reviewer finds neither book descriptively or prescriptively adequate, though others will find one or the other the best thing since wholewheat hosts. □

Terrence W. Tilley, *chair of the theology department at the University of Dayton, is author of* Inventing Catholic Tradition *(Orbis).*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THIRTY-ONE YEARS OF SOLITUDE

The Feast of the Goat
Mario Vargas Llosa
Translated by Edith Grossman
Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $25, 409 pp.

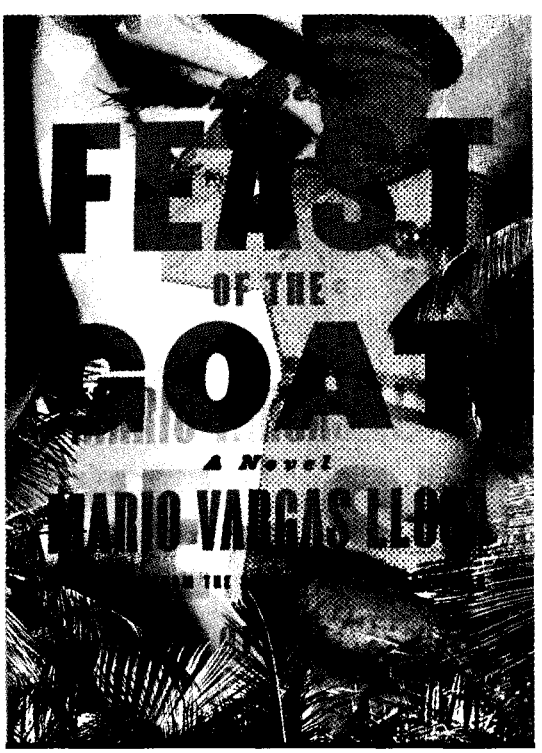
Gene H. Bell-Villada

The Goat" was one of the popular, clandestine nicknames of Rafael Leónidas Trujillo, the grotesque generalissimo who skillfully combined humiliation and terror, bribery and blood in tyrannizing the Dominican Republic from 1930 until 1961, when he was finally assassinated by a cadre of young army officers (with some U.S. help).

The Feast of the Goat will most surely become *the* book about the long Trujillo nightmare and the ongoing, sordid aftermath. It joins the ranks of other now-classic novels—such as Gabriel García Márquez's *The Autumn of the Patriarch*, or Tomás Eloy Martínez's diptych dealing with the Perón pair—that famously capture the oddities, myths, and ordinary horrors of life under a Latin military despot.

On a different note, the book miraculously restores Peruvian novelist Mario Vargas Llosa to literary-master status. Over the last couple of decades Varga Llosa seemed in decline as he misdirected his talents toward an ill-fated campaign for the Peruvian presidency in 1990, and generally morphed into a cranky, libertarian publicist and right-wing scold. Meanwhile his novels lost their rigor and scope, and some, like *Mayta* (1984) and *The Storyteller* (1990), were downright sketchy. With this grand canvas, however, he recaptures the early greatness of *Conversation in the Cathedral* (1969) and *The War of the End of the World* (1981). It has been twenty years since Vargas Llosa came up with a novel this vivid and thrilling.

No review can do justice to the abundant details and intrigues, the relentless pace yet utter translucency of *The Feast of the Goat*, much of which is historically true. Four stories interconnect, flashing back and forward, Faulkner-style. Chief focus is on the seventy-year-old phenomenon Trujillo, his rituals, manias, and wiles. At his desk by 6 A.M., he works twenty hours a day, seven days a week. His attire is always impeccable (he's most bothered by Hitler's sartorial sloppiness). He doesn't sweat, he hardly sleeps. His fabled gaze can impale the proudest and most hardened of fighters. An evil genius at manipulation, he smooth-talks his enemies into serving him "for the good of the country" even as he ridicules them in public. An amoral gangster, he keeps thousands of thugs on the government payroll, patrolling the streets in black VW Beetles. His sole diversion is sex—bedding down young virgins, cuckolding his close subordinates, and then boasting of the exploits in banquet speeches. Trujillo and his loutish henchmen represent sadism elevated to ordinary social custom and system. The novel re-imagines "The Goat" in his final two weeks of life.



Waiting for Trujillo one night by the capital city's sea wall are a handful of aggrieved army men who've plotted his death. In these suspense-filled scenes we become acquainted with each of the dissidents, and learn of their personal histories and their bitterness at the Benefactor for his having thoroughly degraded their, and the citizenry's, lives.

The Goat is gunned down halfway through the book; what follows, however, is horrific beyond measure. Plans for a postassassination coup go awry, precisely as a result of the knee-jerk loyalties and demonic efficiency of the dictatorial machine. Readers should be warned of the wrenching, though never gratuitous, accounts of dehumanization and torture that take up some of these pages.

Equally sinister are the rise and triumph of Trujillo's figurehead president, Dr. Joaquín Balaguer, a creature so strange he could have been dreamt up by García Márquez. Short, round-faced, with tiny hands, he is the phrasemaker and flatterer extraordinaire, a master of protocol and composure. Asexual, indifferent to wealth, and lacking in any military experience whatsoever, this cunningly mellifluous courtier nonetheless takes control, outwitting his most brutish rivals via a mix of honeyed words and shrewd alliances. In the end the regime doesn't die, it gets "civilized." (In real life, Balaguer would remain in power until the 1990s, completely blind yet as foxy as ever. Now, through Vargas Llosa's pen, he becomes a memorable character in literature.)

Framing the entire novel is its only presumably fictive matter, the personal odyssey of Urania Cabral, an attractive, forty-nine-year-old Manhattan lawyer-spinster who, at

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age fourteen, was hastily sent off for study in the United States, far from the Goat's mad whims. Now, in 1997, she returns for a visit to her relatives and her paralyzed, mute father, an erstwhile, earnest Trujillo ally and senator. These homey chapters provide the book's few glimpses of family warmth and humane feeling. Yet here too Trujillo's destructive whims had once intruded, and Urania's macabre reminiscences (which obviously one shouldn't divulge here) will build up to a chilling surprise, a flashback ending followed by a complex and equally surprising coda.

Vargas Llosa, a master of counterpoint, weaves these diverse voices into a narrative fugue that moves full speed ahead through crescendo and climax. As befits a historical thriller, the book is replete with period information. Readers will learn truckloads about what Trujillo did to his own people, about the terrible traumas that didn't heal—and in the bargain they will be gripped by a superb page-turner. Moreover, like many novels about tyranny, the insights gleaned from *The Feast of the Goat* apply to everyday "politics" in the widest sense. Some of the palace intrigues depicted here are perfectly conceivable in our corporate or academic corridors. Balaguer's florid pat phrases, smiling threats, and faux-pious grieving will ring familiar to anyone who has endured manipulative kin, colleague, or boss.

The book is nicely translated by Edith Grossman, although the dialogue portions could be more oral and colloquial, more "I've got" than "I have." At times her rendering of military dirty-talk misses the mark ("You have a lot of balls"—instead of simply "You've got balls"). Also, the Spanish adjective *genial* is not our English "genial," but rather indicates a work or action that is "of genius." Still, Grossman has done a remarkable job, and American readers have every reason to feel grateful for her monumental labors. □

Gene H. Bell-Villada *teaches Spanish at Williams College, and is the author of books on Borges and García Márquez. His latest work of fiction is* The Pianist Who Liked Ayn Rand: A Novella & 13 Stories *(Amador).*

THE STORY SO FAR

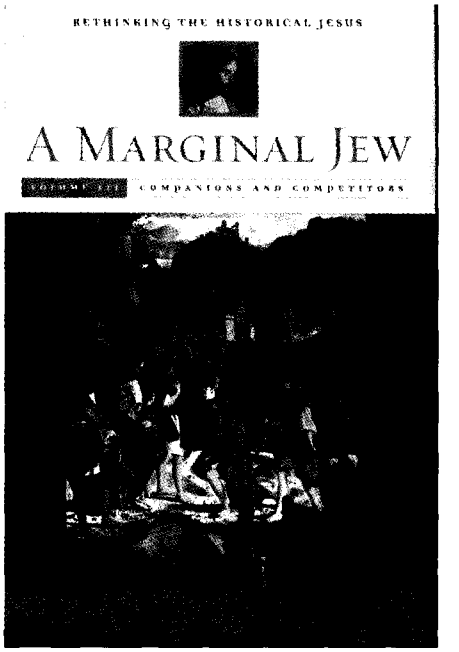
A Marginal Jew
Rethinking the Historical Jesus
Volume III: Companions and Competitors
John Meier
Doubleday, $40, 669 pp.

Luke Timothy Johnson

While many of the recent combatants in the Jesus Wars have devoted themselves to lecture tours and book signings, John Meier has continued to grind away at the project to which he dedicated himself more than a decade ago. This is the third large volume in a projected series of four. For readers still in high school when *A Marginal Jew* made its first appearance in 1991, a brief summary of Meier's method and progress may provide a useful preface to a review of this newest volume.

From the start, Meier took pains to distinguish his approach from that of the agitators and popularizers. His Jesus was not the "real" Jesus but the best one proper historiography could provide. His aim was not the reform of the church but the intellectual consent of an imaginary "unpapal conclave" consisting of a Catholic, Protestant, Jew, and agnostic. His approach was sober and steady: rather than fit Jesus into a reconstruction of Judaism in the first century, Meier has maintained a constant back-and-forth movement between Jesus and his Jewish environment. In his first volume (*The Roots of the Problem and the Person*), he used the converging lines of evidence provided by the best Jewish and Christian sources (mainly Josephus and the canonical Gospels) to sketch the broad outlines of Jesus' ministry, and the basic facts concerning his origin and social status. In the second volume (*Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, 1994), Meier connected Jesus to the ministry of John the Baptist, and evaluated the traditions concerning Jesus as wonderworker and as prophetic announcer of God's rule.

Meier is deeply, even passionately, committed to the classic historical-critical paradigm within New Testament studies, and his method of constructing the figure of Jesus from the sources stands solidly within that framework. He takes discrete units of tradition and tests them for their probable origin in Jesus by means of the standard criteria of multiple attestation, discontinuity, embarrassment, and coherence. The expectation is that the incremental accumulation of such pieces will slowly reveal a convincingly historical person who is, Meier argues, recognizably "Jewish," yet also identifiably "marginal." At the end of the second volume, Meier summarizes his findings: (1) Jesus is seen by others and himself as an eschatological prophet who proclaims the imminent coming of God's reign; (2) unlike John the Baptist, Jesus celebrates that kingdom as already present in his ministry, above all through



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his open-table fellowship and his miracles; (3) the combination of prophetic persona and wonderworking casts Jesus in the role of Elijah. Such conclusions are not substantial or innovative. But in Meier's view, they have the advantage (over every other reconstruction) of being based on the meticulous examination of every bit of data and the patient adjudication of every scholarly dispute concerning the data.

This third volume (*Companions and Competitors*) complicates the picture by placing this hypothetical Jesus into conversation with two other hypothetical reconstructions. The basic idea is sound: historical figures are known as much from their followers and opponents as from what they said and did. Execution, however, is difficult. In search of companions, Meier sorts through every scrap of information concerning those whom the Gospels call "the crowds," determining that Jesus in fact sometimes spoke in public to groups. He dissects the material on "disciples" and concludes that there were some people who followed Jesus and had that designation. He argues that there was a group among his followers called the Twelve and that Jesus probably sent them on a symbolic tour of Israel. About the individual members of the Twelve, we have real knowledge only of Judas and Peter. Net result? Jesus had companions. Pages to accomplish this result? One hundred seventy of text and 115 of notes.

In quest of Jesus' competitors, Meier presents state-of-the-art discussions of the identifiable parties in first-century Palestine: the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes (and Qumran), Samaritans, Scribes, Herodians, and Zealots. There is much learning here, and a helpful distinction consistently made between what good historical methods allow us to say about these people, and what irresponsible publications sometimes claim. The problem is the misalignment between historical knowledge in general and pertinence to the historical Jesus. We have much good contemporary information about the Essenes and Qumran, but no sign that Jesus had any connection with them. The Gospels show Jesus interacting with Samaritans, but our knowledge of them is slender. The Sadducees engage Jesus directly only once, and that's good, because what shows up in that story is about equal to what we can say about the Sadducees. The little that can be said about Zealots and Herodians matches perfectly their unimportance in the Gospels. Finally, in the Gospels, the Pharisees interact vigorously with Jesus, and after we adjust for a biased perspective, the Gospels also turn out to be our best source of information generally about the Pharisees in the first century (apart from Josephus, and a few lines in Paul and the Mishnah). The discussion of the Pharisees' adversarial relationship with Jesus is delayed until the next volume, since so many of their interactions involved issues of law. The overall results from 190 pages of close analysis in the text and 134 pages of intense discussion in footnotes? That the information about these groups in the Gospels fits intelligibly within all our other historical knowledge about them, and that all our other historical knowledge about the groups does not throw much additional light on what the Gospels say about them.

In his final thirty-two pages, Meier integrates these results into a summary of the portrait of Jesus emerging from the three volumes and sketches the "four great enigmas" that he will take up in the fourth volume: Jesus' relation to the law of Moses, his parabolic speech, his self-designations, and the reasons for his death. Readers who want a clear and attractive précis of the entire three volumes would do well to read this last section. What this volume adds is a sense of Jesus as a person interacting with other persons rather than with history or the divine plan in the abstract. His calling of followers and his designation of them as the Twelve suggest a certain intention in the direction of institution; his debates with all available Jewish groups suggest both a public and an idiosyncratic ministry.

In earlier reviews in *Commonweal* of his previous volumes (April, 24, 1992, and November, 18, 1994), I praised what should be praised in Meier's work: his thoroughness in discussing issues, his fairness and comprehensiveness in reporting alternative views, his impressive mastery of the ancient material. The same virtues continue here. I also raised a number of critical questions concerning Meier's procedures. As one might have expected from so methodical a worker, the same tendencies that I criticized earlier reappear. Meier's methods yield at best "the historically verifiable Jesus" within the gospel tradition, and that only with distinct degrees of probability. But what can be "verified" by the canons of historical criticism as going back to Jesus necessarily falls short of a comprehensive picture.

The danger lies in seeking more than the method can yield, and Meier does not always avoid that temptation, despite his frequent disparagement of "imagination" and "fantasy" in the views of others. One example: Meier does a good job establishing the high probability that Jesus named a circle of his followers "The Twelve." That is not an inconsiderable accomplishment. But Meier wants more. He struggles with the question of whether Jesus sent out the Twelve on a mission, and despite some difficulties in his argument, he makes a decent case that Jesus probably gave them a share in his own ministry, even though the passage describing their commission is problematic.

Then Meier seeks the meaning of that sending, and with that step goes well beyond what his own method allows. He concludes that Jesus sent them out, not primarily as a pragmatic campaign of propaganda, but as a "prophetic-symbolic gesture" of the "regathering the scattered people of God" that would only be complete "when he came into full power (that is, in his kingdom) and restored the twelve tribes." In a note, Meier adds, "Needless to say, I am not advocating here Albert Schweitzer's dubious hypothesis...that Jesus expected the kingdom of God to come fully before his disciples finished their mission..." But why is Schweitzer's hypothesis more "dubious" than Meier's? One could make a case that an Elijah-like prophet expecting the kingdom might well have sent out his followers

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with such an expectation. This is as intrinsically plausible as imagining Jesus performing an obscure "symbolic" gesture without much content. My point is simply that this kind of interpretation is invariably "imaginative" and that once it is entered into, Meier's method does not help us declare between Jesus as self-conscious symbol-maker and Jesus as deluded.

When Meier proceeds to consider the individual members of the Twelve and begins with the admission that we can say "next to nothing" about them, the reader must wonder why he then devotes eighty-three pages to hammering that nullity home. His reason for doing so, he says, is to counter the tendency to construct knowledge about the Twelve from apocryphal Gospels and Acts, works of "popular piety and bizarre imagination." But since his discussion restricts itself to the canonical sources (and therefore can add nothing to what any reader can see), and since his notes take up the theories derived from other sources only to dismiss them, and since in any case whatever we could know about the individual members of the Twelve would be at best peripheral to our knowledge of Jesus, one wonders whether the entire lengthy exercise has become less about the identity of the historical Jesus and more about testing the historicity of every bit of the Gospels.

Over the course of these three massive volumes, Meier has made the case that Jesus was a prophetic figure within Judaism who was linked to John the Baptist, who expected God's rule and performed healings as a sign of that rule, who associated with the outcast, who had a more or less definite group of followers, and who interacted with other intentional Jewish groups. Has Meier's method made these aspects of Jesus more historically probable? Yes. Has the yield been worth the effort expended by the author or demanded of the reader? Let each one judge. □

Luke Timothy Johnson *is the Robert R. Woodruff Professor of New Testament at the Candler School of Theology, Emory University. Among his more recent books is* The Real Jesus *(HarperSanFrancisco).*

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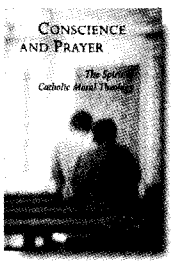

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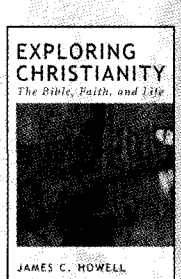

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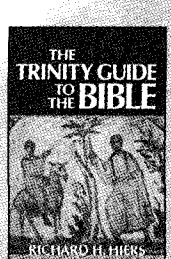

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HOMAGE IN CATALONIA

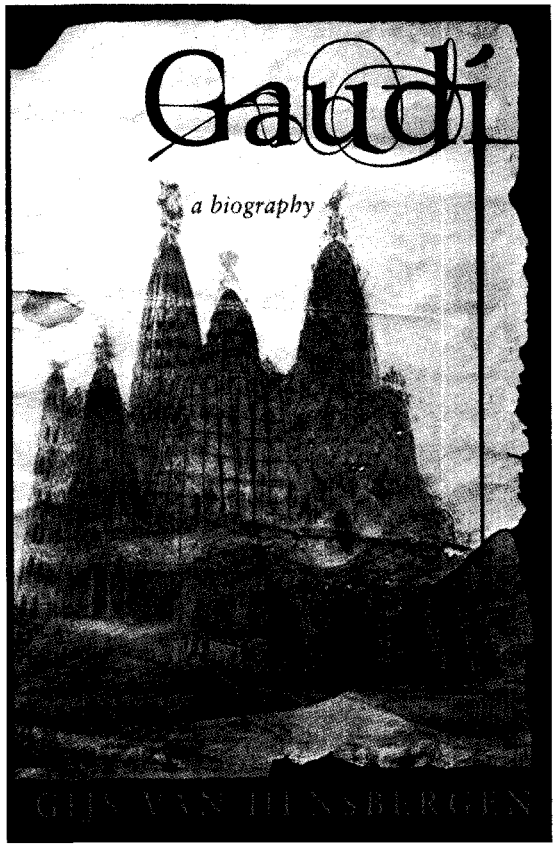
Gaudí
Gijs van Hensbergen
HarperCollins, $35, 368 pp.

Donna Gustafson

There is a tradition of biographies of artists that goes back at least as far as Giorgio Vasari's great *Lives of the Artists*, first published in 1550. Vasari focused on biography in order to paint a picture, if you will, of the men who had distinguished themselves by the creation of their hands. Vasari clearly felt the necessity of attending to his contemporary and future readers. In his introduction to part 2 of the *Lives*, he defines the purpose of history as setting "forth the underlying currents, the character of events, for from these details men learn the true government of life" and as providing "the pleasure of reading about the past as though it were the living present."

Vasari's ideals are still pertinent. What has changed, however, is our view of artists. For Vasari, the artists of the Italian Renaissance were nothing less than heroic. In contemporary times, there are few among us who would accord that distinction to a great painter, sculptor, or architect. We are accustomed to seeing the artist's talent in the context of personal weakness, terrible deprivation, or amorality of one kind or another—all of which help us to understand the compulsion to create that is a significant part of artistic practice. Gijs van Hensbergen's new biography of the Catalan architect Antonio Gaudí (1852–1926), renowned for his work in the city of Barcelona, is disappointing for just that reason. An abundance of detail explains the "underlying currents" of Gaudí's cultural moment, but these details do not explain the mystery of the man or come to terms with the greatness of his architecture.

In all fairness, there are real difficulties in explaining Gaudí. First, the architect's personal and working archives were destroyed in the Spanish Civil War. Second, Gaudí has been mythologized; he is variously described as a saint (and in fact, a group is avidly pursuing his beatification), a sinner, an egomaniac, a tyrant, and a gentle soul. How to reconcile all those contradictory identities in the man who built the Park Güell, one of the most beautiful and sensual city parks in the Western world, and who sacrificed the second half of his career to build Sagrada Família, the Church of the Holy Family, in the center of Barcelona?



From the perspective of the twenty-first century, Gaudí's mystery lies in his unique identity as an antimodernist modernist. His work can be fairly neatly divided between secular work for an enlightened patron of the arts, Eusebi Güell, and his work on behalf of the Catholic Church. Gaudí was an original and deeply individualistic modern master, but he was also a man who looked to medieval society to solve the crises that beset cultures living through the upheavals of the Industrial Revolution and the effects of global economies. The two principles that guided his life and career were a deep Catholic faith and Catalan nationalism.

While van Hensbergen is to be commended for providing the first biography of the architect in English, there are confusing passages and conflicting points of view that make the book difficult to read. At times the author closes off exploration of significant decisions and actions by issuing pat explanations, only to reopen the discussion a few pages later. One example of this is the discussion of Gaudí's celibacy, which van Hensbergen attributes to the architect's rejection by one woman to whom he proposed marriage. Later, the author perceptively describes the latent eroticism of the late nineteenth-century Catholic revival in Europe, and specifically in Barcelona, in the context of the "decadence" movement exemplified by Oscar Wilde and Aubrey Beardsley, but he stops short of attributing any such feelings to Gaudí. Inexplicably, he finds it necessary to declare that there is no evidence to suggest that Gaudí was homosexual.

At other times, van Hensbergen's excessive enthusiasm for his subject creates confusion. What can be drawn from statements about the Sagrada Família such as "The project is scheduled for completion around 2030 assuming the steady flow of donations does not dry up," or "Each time we push our way through the Sagrada Família's turnstiles we pay for another stone to be laid and expiate another sin. We should never try to fin-

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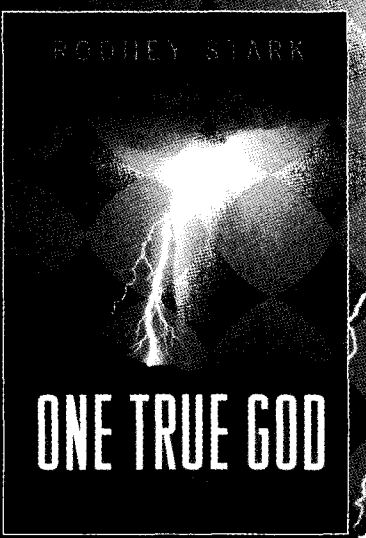
ish the Sagrada Família, otherwise we undo the web or power that is elaborately woven into this mysterious religious spell."

These frustrations aside, the book makes a significant contribution to the understanding of the great Catalan architect. Certainly van Hensbergen has amassed a formidable amount of research and by focusing on the writings of Gaudí's countrymen—both critics and admirers—he provides a much-needed local grounding for an architect known the world over for his innovative designs. While the true nature of Gaudí's religious fervor remains unknown and perhaps unexplainable, the complex power structures among the various factions of the Catholic Church and the Catalan patriots are well described and help to explain Gaudí's devotion to the Sagrada Família. In addition, the discussion of Gaudí's relationship with the immensely wealthy Güell (whom Gaudí compared to a Medici) and the series of building projects that fell to Gaudí under Güell's patronage is extremely enlightening, not the least for the credit that van Hensbergen gives to Güell as a partner in Gaudí's architecture. Of less importance, but of significant interest, are the remarks that the author recounts from artist contemporaries like Pablo Picasso, whose wicked sense of humor was trained on Gaudí's architecture, and the irreverent, surrealist painter, Salvador Dali, whom Gaudí would surely have been alarmed to find among his supporters.

As one would expect, the book ends with the story of Gaudí's tragic death in a streetcar accident. Van Hensbergen's research provides evidence that the architect, as has been told, was hit by a streetcar and left to die after being mistaken for a tramp, but van Hensbergen also finds sympathetic onlookers who tried to help the unknown man. As a fitting tribute to both the architect's work and his service to the faith, Gaudí was buried in the crypt of the Sagrada Família. □

Donna Gustafson *is director of exhibitions, Hunterdon Museum of Art, Clinton, New Jersey.*

ONE TRUE GOD
Historical Consequences of Monotheism
RODNEY STARK



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GOD IS A SOCIOLOGIST

One True God
Historical Consequences of Monotheism
Rodney Stark
Princeton University Press, $24.95, 301 pp.

Paul J. Griffiths

Rodney Stark is a widely published and well-reputed sociologist of religion. He has written in the past on such matters as the origin and spread of Christianity, the nature and sociological significance of religious experience, and the reasons why some new religious movements flourish and others do not. He is a theoretical thinker whose interests almost always push him to a high level of abstraction. While he doesn't quite want a theory of everything, he has in the past gone so far as to tilt at the windmill of a complete theory of religion, and in this book he attempts nothing less than a theoretical understanding of monotheism that will be, as he likes to put it, "sociologically useful," by which he means capable of handling the historical in an illuminating way.

Stark's theory has monotheism—the belief that there is just one God, just one giver of supernatural blessings and curses—as its object. He wants to explain monotheism's origins and development, to show its main effects upon the behavior and attitudes of social groups, and to account for the fact that monotheists are sometimes aggressively intolerant of those who do not share their beliefs and at other times civilly forebearing.

The theory of origins that he offers is not new: people, he says, are interested in the gods because they want to get from them otherwise scarce or unavailable goods (cures from sickness, material prosperity, immortality, and so on). People will, he thinks, tend to prefer gods who are reliable and predictable, and who have the power to deliver what's wanted; they will, then, over time tend to evolve monotheistic beliefs, because it's easier and better to deal with one God than with many, especially with a God whose power is limitless.

This is an evolutionary theory of a delightful quaintness. Reading it took me back to the texts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when scholars debated endlessly and passionately the origins of monotheism (Did it evolve out of polytheism? Or is polytheism a degenerate form of monotheism? Or...). We do not know enough to be able to answer the question, and we never will; perhaps only sociologists with broad-scope historical interests have not realized this. What Stark offers on this topic is of no more historical value than attempts to derive a global history of belief in the gods and God from the narratives of the Book of Genesis. Fortunately, Stark does not spend a great deal of time on this aspect of his theory of monotheism. His main interest is in accounting for what monotheism makes people do, not in how they got to be that way.

One of the things that monotheism makes people do is attempt conversion of those who do not share their beliefs. Stark treats this at length, and illuminatingly. He is entirely correct to perceive that monotheism sits well with the missionary impulse, and that this is not merely a theoretical point but also one for which there is good historical evidence. He is interesting, too, on the difference between missions aimed at cultural elites (his paradigms here are the spread of Buddhism to China in the early centuries of the Christian era, and the evangelization of northern Europe by Catholic Christians). Missions of this sort, he says, typically result in the people never being successfully evangelized, and therefore in a shallow-rooted (and easily uprooted) presence of the missionary faith. Stark claims, strikingly, that Scandinavia and Latin America have never been properly Christianized. Missions that establish local networks on the ground, by contrast (he often calls these "authentic" missions, meaning, I think, not only that they are successful but that he approves of them), will root the missionizing faith deeply and make it more difficult to extirpate.

More problematic is Stark's attempt to differentiate sharply between the

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Abrahamic monotheisms (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) and missionary traditions such as Buddhism. His claims about Buddhism, especially, seem often to be the product of imagining an orthodox Buddhism that never existed. Did the founder of Buddhism, Gotama Sākyamuni, reject supernatural beings, as Stark claims? There is absolutely no evidence to suggest this and much to suggest the contrary, and this is only one error among many on Buddhism and Asian traditions in general.

The best part of the book is Stark's analysis of the fact that monotheists sometimes kill those who aren't monotheistic (or those who adopt a different form of monotheism). This topic is given a pressing poignancy in light of the events of September 11, and this is especially so if, as seems likely, the deaths caused in those events were in part motivated by a particular construal of Islamic monotheism.

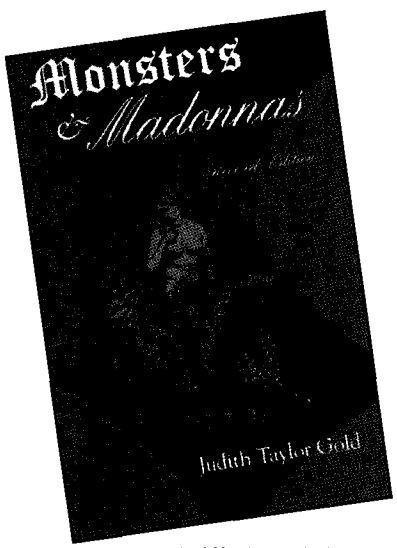
What, then, in Stark's view makes the difference? Why do monotheists sometimes kill in the name of monotheism and sometimes not? The likelihood that monotheists will kill the alien is maximized, says Stark, when a particular monotheism is under threat, either by another (as when European Christians felt themselves threatened by Islam), or by some external circumstance such as natural disaster (as when the Black Death killed one-third of the population of Europe in the fourteenth century). In such cases, it is likely that the threatened monotheists will act violently toward aliens in their midst. And, as Stark's investigation convincingly shows, outbreaks of Christian Jew-killing in Europe can be tightly indexed to just such conditions. It follows that in order to minimize the use of violence, such conditions ought to be removed. And this is best done, claims Stark, when religious diversity is maximized and no one, or two, monotheisms hold the reins of political power. Under such conditions, civility on the part of monotheists is not only possible but likely, and this without loss of deep conviction.

This is an interesting argument to consider in light of September's events. On one reading, those events confirm Stark's analysis. If it is the case that Muslims planned and executed the killings in the name of Islam, then it's likely they did so in part because they felt themselves under threat from the United States as a world-dominating cultural force. But in another way, perhaps, Stark's analysis is called into question by the events. For an element in the perceived threat of U.S. political and social culture is precisely its advocacy of deep religious pluralism and maximal religious diversity. What Stark presents as the condition for the possibility of monotheistic civility may in this case have been (and may continue to be) among the conditions for the possibility of continued violent hostilities. This is not a pleasing prospect.

There is much to be grateful for in *One True God*. Stark writes with clarity and wit, and offers a theory of considerable plausibility and interest, even if it is also one that moves at such a high level of generality that it is often difficult to know how it could be falsified. But there is also much to give pause. Stark's picture of the conditions under which monotheistic violence will be minimized and monotheistic civility maximized is, of course, an approximate depiction of those obtaining in the United States now, and is clearly intended as such. Is his book then to be understood as one more paean of praise to American exceptionalism? Is it yet another apologia for the glories of the American experiment with religious liberty? That this is likely the case is shown by the fact that Stark wants to emphasize that the deep pluralism of the American scene is compatible with equally deep religious conviction. We can, he thinks, have it all: civility, peace, monotheistic passion. But to think so is, surely, the fundamental American illusion, and Stark's subjection to it explains why he so drastically underemphasizes the corrosion and privatization of monotheistic commitments caused by the very social conditions that he takes to maximize monotheistic civility. It is also why he does not see that advocacy of just the kind present in this book is an ingredient in the present troubles. □

Paul J. Griffiths *holds the chair in Catholic studies at the University of Illinois, Chicago.*

WAS JESUS THE BRIDEGROOM OF HIS MOTHER?



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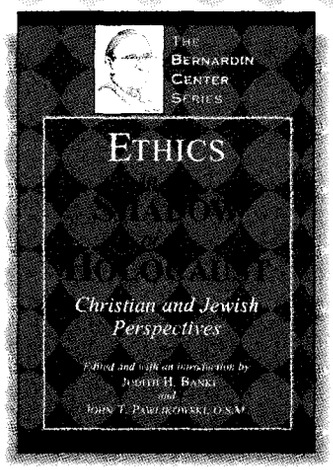

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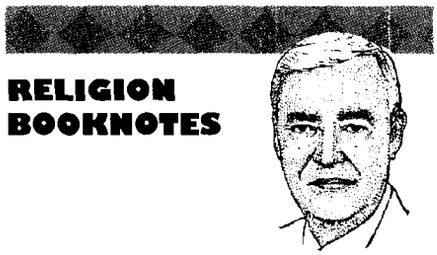


RELIGION BOOKNOTES

Lawrence S. Cunningham

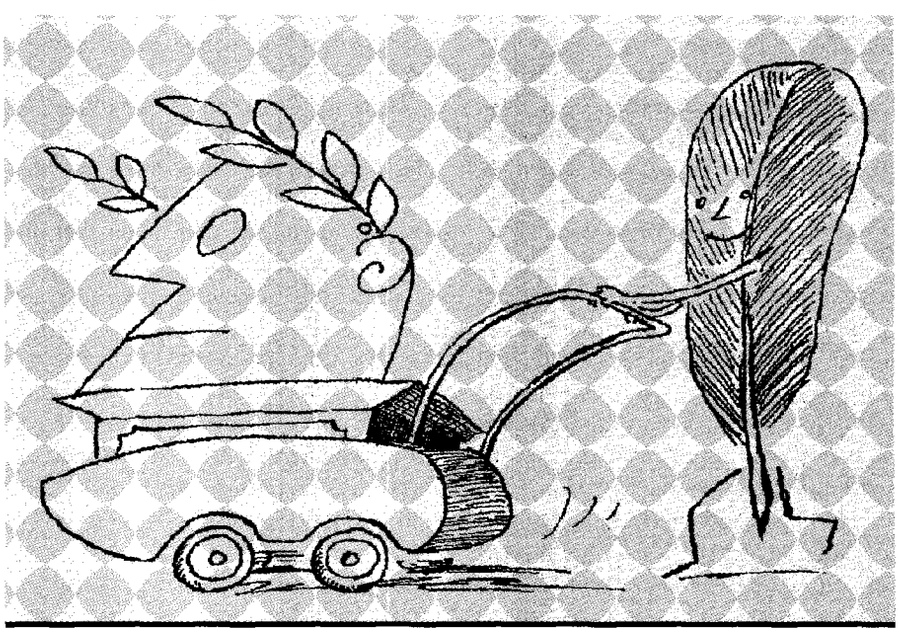
Largely inspired by the pioneering work of Latin American liberation theologians, there is now a wide range of theologians who write within specific historical and/or existential contexts. Asian, African, and womanist theologies abound. As those theologies grow, they become more specific to reflect lived experience; hence, for example, the distinction between feminist and womanist theology, with the latter term used to designate women of color. Over the past thirty years, a growing number of theologians have recognized that the experience of Hispanics in the United States is not the same as their Central or South American counterparts'. For that reason, like-minded Hispanic thinkers have banded together to reflect on their Christian faith within the context of living in the United States. Their common purpose has given birth to a professional association and journal, both known by the acronym ACHTUS (Association of Catholic Hispanic Theologians of the United States).

La Cosecha: Harvesting Contemporary United States Hispanic Theology (1972–98)
Eduardo C. Fernandez
Michael Glazier/Liturgical Press, $19.95, 206 pp.

La Cosecha ("The Harvest"), Eduardo Fernandez's rewritten doctoral thesis presented at Rome's Gregorian University, is the first full-length assessment of the rise and significance of this relatively new theological movement. Hence, the bibliography at the end of the work is particularly valuable as it provides an authoritative listing of all the major works of Hispanic theologians over the last generation.

Anyone who pays attention to religious demographics in this country will not be surprised at the rise of such a theological enterprise. Fernandez himself notes that within a decade Hispanics may account for 50 percent of all Catholics in the United States. How the church responds to that rate, and to the perception that large numbers of Hispanics leave the church, is crucial. (Notre Dame has started a highly visible Center for Latino Studies, and aggressively recruited Hispanic faculty and students. Nearly 20 percent of this fall's incoming class is Hispanic).

As Fernandez traces its history, His-



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panic theology derives mainly from the work of Paris-trained Texan Virgilio Elizondo (now at Notre Dame). Rightly called the "herald of U.S. Hispanic theology," Elizondo, one-time rector of San Antonio's cathedral, was first to ponder the significance of "reading the Bible in Spanish," the meaning of Our Lady of Guadalupe, as well as the theological resources behind Hispanic liturgical practices, popular devotions, and symbolic actions like the Christmas *Posada*. Subsequent theologians have built on his pioneering insights into popular religion (Orlando Espin and Timothy Matovina), pastoral issues (Allen F. Deck), theological methodology (Roberto Goizueta and Alex Garcia-Rivera), and the nexus between popular religion and the transcendent (Jaime Vidal). Fernandez also includes an account of the pioneering work of women theologians Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz and Maria Pilar Aquino, as well as Protestant theologians like the prolific Cuban-born Methodist, Justo Gonzalez.

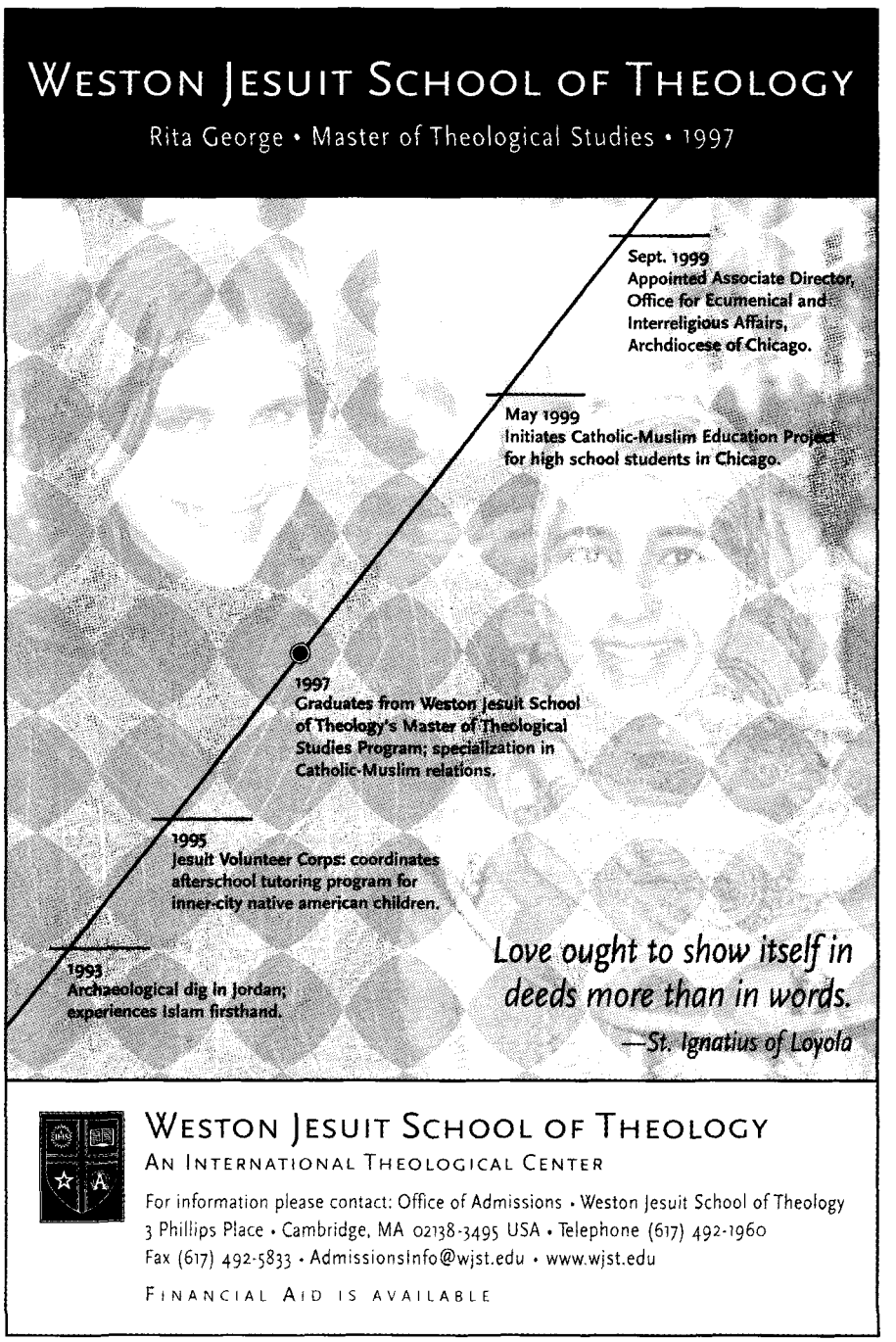
Fernandez concludes with future trajectories of Hispanic theology and a survey of work to be done. Little, for example, has been written on Hispanic youth, or the ways that theological approaches founded on immigrant realities might change when American Hispanics begin to reach a more assimilated status. Fernandez is sensitive to the fact the very word "Hispanic" is a bit of an abstraction, since there are widely different cultural groups who live under that umbrella term. What is pertinent to one group may be irrelevant to another. As the current interests of many of these theologians become conventional opinion (Is there anyone who doubts that popular religion is an important resource for theological reflection?), a new stage of theological reflection may be needed. Finally, nagging pastoral issues, not least of which is the need for Hispanic priests in communities beyond the traditional Sunbelt states, require further thought.

In sum: I highly recommend this well-researched volume. It provides the best overall picture of Hispanic theological efforts within the United States. And it gives us the current *status questionis* in that it provides us a notion of where things are and leaves us with questions about where things will (or may) go.

The Better Part: Stages for Contemplative Living
Thomas Keating, O.C.S.O.
Continuum, $14.95, 128 pp.

Many contemporaries aspire to, but few deserve, the honorific term, "spiritual master." One who does is Thomas Keating. Former abbot of the Cistercian monastery in Massachusetts, Keating is now a monk at the Snowmass, Colorado, monastery. He is an indefatigable teacher of "centering prayer," a regular participant in interreligious meetings, and the guiding spirit behind the "Contemplative Outreach" movement.

The Better Part is a modest volume in size but capacious in its wisdom and common (spiritual) sense. Utilizing the gospel story of Martha and Mary to speak of the contemplative life, Keating adds a new twist to an old analogy. Traditionally, Martha is identified with the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active life and Mary with the contemplative; the latter has chosen the "better part." That story is a standard topos in patristic and medieval literature. Keating, however, takes a somewhat different—indeed, brilliant—approach by recalling that their brother, Lazarus, died and was raised by Jesus. Keating sees Lazarus as the model for the apex of contemplative prayer: he passes beyond sitting at the feet of Jesus (like Mary) and undergoes a spiritual death and rebirth not unlike the passage through the active and passive night of faith described by John of the Cross.

In brief but dense chapters linking prayer, attentive reading of the Scriptures (*lectio divina*), and the Eucharist, Keating offers a vision of an ever-deepening life of spiritual transformation. Perhaps the most original part of the book is the last section in which Keating answers frequently asked questions about prayer in general and centering prayer in particular. Here Keating provides new ways to understand prayer in relation to the humanity of Jesus, the character of sin, the problem of suffering, and compulsive thoughts or temptations to evil. It is in this Q&A that one gets a real glimpse of how a great spiritual teacher thinks.

It has been argued that the current interest in contemplative prayer is a middle-class luxury for those who wish to experience some kind of spiritual frisson. To that objection Keating intelligently counters that too many religious people live with a religious "superego," by which he means the tendency to act out what we have been taught to think. This, in a fine phrase of Keating, leads people to shoot people in Northern Ireland. Contemplative practice tames the superego, promotes solidarity, and engenders peace. Neither those looking for "spiritual experience" of an emotional sort, nor those who base their actions on unexamined inherited images of God are on the right contemplative path. He further argues that contemplative living is not a form of spiritual individualism; on the contrary, he shows how the contemplative life is one characterized by deep sensitivity to the needs of the world.

It would be wonderful for someone to interview Keating at length and publish the results as a book. His capacity to say profound things in a relatively brief space is pure gift. The final twenty-seven pages of Q&A are worth the price of the book. I wished only for more.

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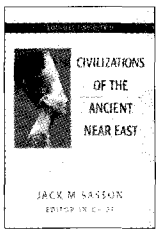

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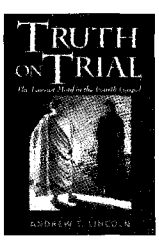

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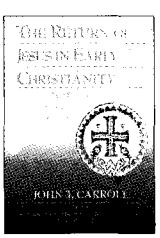

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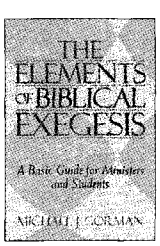

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Still Learning: Spiritual Sketches from a Professor's Life
Robert Kiely
Medio Media, $14.95, 205 pp.

A distinguished professor of literature at Harvard, Robert Kiely is a longtime practitioner of daily meditation developed from his encounter with the teachings of the late John Main, a Benedictine monk. (Main's method of meditation bears a similarity to, but has some differences from, centering prayer as practiced and taught by Keating.) In his arresting spiritual memoir, Kiely describes his encounter with Main and what the practice of contemplative meditation means to him. Hardly an au-

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tobiography in any sense of the term, the subtitle word "sketches" is an apt description of this book. Included is a very moving account of the birth of his last daughter—a preemie who had to fight for life. When the ordeal is over with the happy result of a healthy child, Kiely makes a litany of persons who aided their baby adding, beautifully, that the Good Samaritans of this world do not make the heavenly company redundant.

Two chapters narrate Kiely's sabbatical year teaching in China where he must adjust to an entirely different culture, a university unlike Harvard (to put it mildly), and the demands of a population hungry for learning and discussion. Most poignant, in my estimation, were his treks to a Catholic church where he joined a Chinese community that worshiped in face of the official displeasure of local authorities. At Christmas, a vaguely familiar hymn, the Chinese version of the French *Il est né, le divin enfant*, moved his Czech-born wife to tears as she remembered her exile in France. It was also a fitting tribute to the French missioners of the nineteenth century who had built the church—their presence came alive for Kiely and his wife not in the stones with which they built, but in a simple Christmas hymn.

Subsequent chapters chronicle his friendship with a young student through whom he developed a passion for cycling, his meditation practice, and his connection to a Montreal priory and the Sienese monastery of Monte Oliveto Maggiore that has deep roots in the meditation tradition taught by Main and by the English monk, Laurence Freeman. In the final chapter, Kiely tells us about his adventures as a master of one of Harvard's residential houses. It is a loving portrait of his work as a teacher-scholar at Harvard (along with a sly critique of the pomposities of the faculty), his dealing with student unrest, and a moving account of his care for the emerging presence of gay students. He ends with an imaginary fresco of *All Saints* in which he places the people at Harvard who have nurtured and edified him over the years. I hope that many students will be lucky enough to encounter a teacher who remembers his students and colleagues with such evident love.

Kiely's book was published by a rather out-of-the-way house (Medio Media in Catalina, Arizona) but it is worth tracking down if one wants to get into the heart and soul of a person whose humanity is nurtured by faith, prayer, and service to others. I very much enjoyed these sketches, and look for more in the future.

One of the significant shifts in Catholic theology has been away from understanding the church as a "perfect society," as Robert Bellarmine famously put it, possessing a transparent, hierarchical structure. In that vision, the pope stood at the apex of a pyramid with the laity forming the base line. But from the nineteenth century onward, theologians in Germany and England sought to recover a different understanding of the

Communion Ecclesiology
Dennis Doyle
Orbis, $24, 196 pp.

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church by emphasizing the sacramental and creedal bonds between all Catholic believers. Vatican II embraced this vision of the church in its use of the metaphor "the community of the People of God" just as, decades earlier, Pope Pius XII brought the phrase "mystical body of Christ" to the fore. This more horizontal view of the church is called communion ecclesiology.

Use of the term is not without peril. Noted ecclesiologist Joseph Komonchak has argued that in order to avoid two conceptual pitfalls—that communion ecclesiology denotes vague feelings of fellowship or, oppositely, a highly mystified church unrooted in history—it is necessary to define what communion ecclesiology is (and is not). Should, for example, communion ecclesiology start from the exigent reality of the local church and circle out to the universal church, or must we give priority to the universal church replicated in the local communion? What is the precise relationship between the church and the larger culture? Is that relationship to be counter-cultural or dialogical? To what degree can communion ecclesiology deal with the historical reality of the church's human failings? Different theologians respond to these and other questions in quite different ways.

It is the precise merit of Dennis Doyle's book to provide a history of the developments in communion ecclesiology from their roots in the nineteenth century to the work of twentieth-century giants Charles Journet, Yves Congar, Henri de Lubac, Karl Rahner, Hans Urs Von Balthasar, and Joseph Ratzinger, as well as those who write from the particular perspective of liberationist, reformist, or social-actionist. Doyle ends his discussion of theologians with an interesting chapter on the thinking of three theologians who reflect, respectively, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Free Church positions: the late Jean Marie Tillard, John Zizioulas, and Miroslav Wolf.

Doyle argues that the articulation of a coherent communion ecclesiology can hold in helpful tension various tendencies within the church, whether "liberal" or "conservative," and thereby mitigate the dangers of sectarianism and dysfunctionalism. Such an ecclesiology would have to do justice to five basic principles: first, the church has a transcendent dimension; second, the church affirms the communion of saints, and is therefore larger than a sociological reality; third, the church, both local and universal, is sacramental; fourth, the church has a history, lives in history, and in relationship to historical moments; fifth, the church's social character requires that it not turn in on itself, indifferent to the needs and demands of the larger world.

This book provides an articulate summary of the leading theological trends in the area of ecclesiology. Doyle is fair in his exposition of different theological opinions while being open about what he sees as deficiencies. He clearly delineates the lasting articulations of theological ideas (he has a soft spot for Henri de Lubac) from those which are only for the moment. Any person who wishes to get a panoramic view of modern ecclesiology will be well served by

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this volume. In addition, its abundant annotation and generous bibliography point the reader to sources for further investigation.

The Making of the Magdalen
Katherine Ludwig Jansen
Princeton University Press, $19.95, 389 pp.

In the year 591, Pope Gregory the Great preached a sermon in the church of San Clemente in Rome in which he argued that the one and same Mary who washed the feet of Christ with her tears in the Gospel of Luke was the sister of Martha in the Gospel of John, and was Mary of Magdala whom Jesus exorcised of seven demons and who later became his devoted disciple, according to the Gospel of Mark. So great was Gregory's authority that the Roman church accepted his Magdalen for almost fourteen hundred years, until the liturgical calendar reform of 1969.

In this revision of her exhaustively researched Princeton dissertation, Katherine Jansen documents how this composite Mary figure became a source for medieval commentators and preachers. Mary was a symbol of, among other things, the repentant sinner (the presumption was, without evidence, that she had been a prostitute), the contemplative life (since she sat at the Lord's feet while her sister Martha busied herself in active service), and, the "apostle to the apostles" (*apostola apostolorum*), a title she merited as witness to the Resurrection of Jesus.

More crucially, there was the almost universally accepted story that Mary Magdalen, along with her brother Lazarus and her sister Martha, had evangelized all of Provence until she took up the eremitic life in the Maritime Alps. Her putative relics were housed at Vezelay, a primary spot on the Compostela pilgrimage road of the Middle Ages. The tradition that she evangelized in France created a sticky problem for the medieval preachers: how to account for a woman preaching when women were not supposed to preach, according to Saint Paul's stipulation that women keep silent in the church? Jansen's ample documentation about this issue raises interesting questions about lay preaching in general and female preaching in particular.

The polysemous Magdalen image provided rich resources. It allowed medieval preachers to inveigh against sumptuous fashion consumption. Her converted life gave inspiration to the recuperation of "fallen women" by the establishment of hostels and asylums for that purpose. Her conversion also tied nicely into the importance that the church (after the Lateran Council IV) put on confession of sins to preachers, especially mendicants, who were not slow to use her as an example of the penitent life. Since, according to the legend, she retired as a hermit, her example could be employed to sing the praises of the contemplative life. The varied aspects of the Magdalen's life enhanced the reforming movement of the medieval church which began under Pope Gregory VII and Saint Peter Damian and culminated in the reforming legislation of Lateran IV. A vast number of medieval churches are named for her and there are widespread depictions of her life in the period's art.

As Jansen's bibliography demonstrates, much scholarship has been devoted to the place of Mary Magdalen in Christian piety. Years ago [November 4, 1994] I reviewed in these pages Susan Haskins's *Mary Magdalen: Myth and Metaphor*. What does this present volume add which has not been said already? First, Jansen limits herself to a discrete period in church history (she ends her story on the eve of the Reformation, during which the cult of the saints underwent an understandable metamorphosis), and focuses on medieval preaching. Second, Jansen has a genuine gift for relating the story of the Magdalen to the larger religious and social history of the period without the usually tendentious "gender studies" palaver that many such works feel a need to include. Nonetheless, it must be said that when Jansen wants to make a point she does it with some sharpness. Consider the last sentence of her book: "We must not forget that it is our own age that officially memorializes Saint Mary Magdalene as a disciple; it was the 'Dark Ages' that honored her as a preacher and apostle of the

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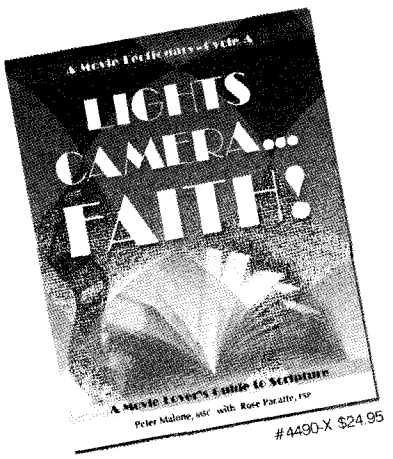

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apostles." Lastly, she is exhaustive in her search for materials. Indeed, if there is a criticism of this work it is that in its transformation from dissertation to book it might have benefited from some judicious pruning but, to be fair, not much. I read this while traveling and found it a welcome companion. It is highly readable, learned, full of interesting material gleaned from primary archival research, and amply illustrated. □

Lawrence S. Cunningham *is the John A. O'Brien Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame.*

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 4)

times speech is conduct. Yes, the Scouts also dismiss heterosexual people for reasons of "immorality." My larger point, however, was that even if they are wrong about the morality of homosexual acts, the Scouts still should have the right to determine the criteria for membership in their own organization.

Stephen Hagerty's question about gay marriage is a difficult one, but I don't see how marriage could be extended to same-sex couples without logically extending it to polygamous unions and other groupings. What would "marriage" mean then?

I envy my interlocutors' moral certainty, but when it comes to sexual morality, and matters of the heart generally, I think more is gained than lost by moving slowly across new frontiers. PAUL BAUMANN

Solidarity forever

In her highly informative October 12 article, "The Sources of 'Rights Talk,'" Mary Ann Glendon asserts that "the church teaches solidarity not as a policy but as a virtue..." Actually, the church teaches solidarity as both a policy (or as a set of policies) and a virtue. Pope John Paul II exemplifies that complementary approach in his teachings on solidarity, as well as on human rights. He is often remarkably explicit on policy issues—his call for the reduction or cancellation of the debt of poor countries, his endorsement of the United Nations and the UN International Labor Organization, his support of labor's right to organize, his advocacy of openness to immigration, his condemnation of racial discrimination, and so on.

At the same time, John Paul extols solidarity as a personal virtue, in line with Glendon's definition (it is a virtue that "inclines us to overcome sources of division within ourselves and within society"). Take, for example, a little-publicized meeting he had in Rome on May 2, 2000, with leaders of international organizations of employers, financiers, and unions. His address to them was a reminder of their personal moral responsibility to globalize solidarity—a typical example of his blending the personal and policy dimensions of solidarity. "It is important to remember," he said, "that the more global the market, the more it must be balanced by a global culture of solidarity that is attentive to the needs of the weakest."

Of course—and this may be Glendon's point—there is no church blueprint that lays out precisely how to make solidarity a reality either in U.S. domestic policy or in global policy. That's the responsibility of lay people, undertaken at their own initiative, at their own risk, in cooperation with others—and inspired by the virtue of solidarity. ROBERT A. SENSER
Reston, Va.

Really, really present

Concerning James Davidson's October 12 article "Yes, Jesus is Really There," I offer the following:

This business of discussing surveys about Catholic lay understanding of Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist is somewhat misleading. Neither the surveyors, nor Davidson, nor the American Catholic bishops in their recent "Real Presence" document, gives a complete Catholic understanding of the Real Presence.

The "General Instruction of the Roman Missal," chapter II, article 7, reads in part: "Christ is really present in the assembly gathered in his name;

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he is present in the person of the minister, in his own word, and indeed substantially and permanently under the eucharistic elements." This is also stated in the Vatican II document, *Sacrosanctum consilium* (article 21) and in Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Mysterium fidei*. Clearly it's Catholic teaching that these "Real Presences" of Christ are one and therefore cannot be separated. It appears that the surveyors, Davidson, and the U.S. bishops, to a certain extent, have done just that.

HERMAN KNOBLE
State College, Pa.

Loss of confidence

The decline in the proper understanding of the Holy Eucharist and the consequent decline in reverence and adoration, are not phenomena in isolation. Their source, as in other matters, is a loss of confidence in the church as teacher. Part 1 of the otherwise splendid new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is a case in point. Even to the moderately educated, the doctrines entwined with primitive anthropology and science appear artificial. We know, for example, that the history of humanity in the Bible is not literal or historical, yet catechisms speak of them as real history and give the impression that doctrines depend on their historicity.

Once the estrangement of science and religion is resolved, and the present chasm bridged, respect for church teaching will become firm.

(REV.) CONNELL J. MAGUIRE
Riviera Beach, Fla.

Virtuosos needed

As a pre-Vatican II Catholic who respects the church, I read with interest James Davidson's "Yes, Jesus Is Really There." Despite evidence that fewer Catholics partake of the sacrament of reconciliation, I have observed that virtually all in attendance at Mass receive the Eucharist. This contrary incidence of participation in the two sacraments differs from pre-Vatican II days when more Catholics went to confession but fewer received Communion. This disconnect in practice makes it difficult to measure belief in the "Real Presence."

The doctrine of transubstantiation is based, in part, on the writings of Aristotle and Aquinas, who hold that material bodies are composed of accidents and substance. During the consecration, the substance of bread and wine is transubstantiated into the body and blood of Jesus, but the accidents of bread and wine remain without substance. Accidents inhering in no substance contradict the original premise on which matter is based.

I suspect that the current confusion among Catholics (young and old) may reflect this incoherent dilemma in Catholic doctrine. Occasionally, *Commonweal* addresses this subject, and I look forward to more articles from "virtuoso" theologians.

EUGENE J. SMITH
Okemos, Mich.

Beyond Aristotle

Thanks for the interesting and informative article by James Davidson on our belief in the eucharistic presence of Jesus. But I have two sets of questions that I think have to be answered clearly if we ever intend to hand on eucharistic doctrine thoughtfully to today's Catholics.

1. Isn't it simply a hallowed way of saying "the entire Jesus" when we say that in Holy Communion we receive "the body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus"? Do we really think that his glorified body has blood flowing through it? Why not say instead we believe that by divine power the God-man Jesus Christ is really and truly present in sacramental form?

2. When we speak of Jesus present under "the appearance of bread and wine" (the two "species"), are we not speaking in a premodern academic way based on a dated vision of physical reality, a view that sees the universe as composed of only substance and accidents? What meaning does that cosmology have for anyone conversant with modern physics? How can the explanation we term "transubstantiation" make any sense to sci-

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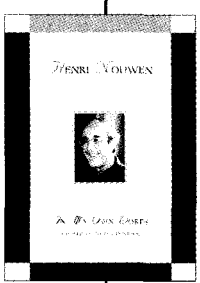

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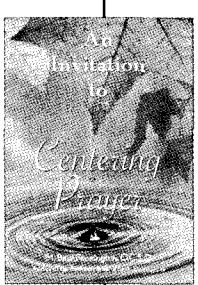

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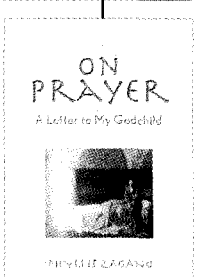

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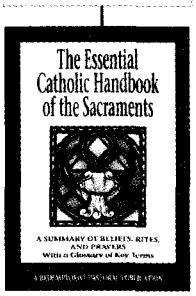

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entific thought that does not explain material reality in the scholastic terms of substance, accidents, primary matter, and substantial form? Are there not reputable Catholic theologians who say that in spite of popular teaching and understanding, transubstantiation is not a truth *de fide definita*? Can there not be some other legitimate explanation as to the "how" of eucharistic presence, for example, some form of transignification or transfinalization? Why is it unacceptable to say simply that the God-man Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist (and can therefore be adored there) in some wonderful but mysterious and unique way? Why must we be so insistent on an Aristotelian concept of substance and substantial change?

Until such questions can be honestly asked in public and thoughtfully answered—without simply quoting the canons of Trent uncritically—I think the present ambivalence in Catholic belief in the Eucharist will continue and even worsen.

ANDREW A. GALLIGAN
Tracy, Calif.

In process

Regarding James Davidson's article on the Real Presence: Because I believe that the sacraments are active, not static, my theology is expressed by way of participles.

It's in the dying and the rising that we are baptized into Christ.

It's in the breaking, sharing, eating, and drinking that Eucharist happens.

By being open to the movement of sacramental grace, we are proclaiming the presence of Christ in ourselves and one another.

Faith in the Real Presence is not an intellectual exercise; it's a process endemic to the realm of the imagination.

NANCY SULLIVAN MURRAY
Syracuse, N.Y.

Doesn't square

In her September 14 column, "Philosopher on Call," Sidney Callahan states that her husband Daniel morally disapproves of "funding

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more research that would involve further destruction of embryos." She also describes him as a "pro-choice bioethicist."

I have great respect for Daniel Callahan's work and views in the field of bioethics. However, it seems hard to reconcile the two statements in quotations. Perhaps I am missing something, but clarification would be helpful.

BILL BRODERICK
Arlington, Va.

The author replies:

Dan's position is a convoluted argument that he should better make for himself. But as I understand it, he primarily objects to scientists following the technological imperative to do whatever can be done without moral considerations or any respect for the embryo. Women's right to choose abortion, by contrast, he thinks reflects private suffering in hard situations. I find this position logically inconsistent and socially destructive.

SIDNEY CALLAHAN

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CALLING RETREAT

John C. Cort

Anyone who is old enough may remember how Robert Hutchins and Mortimer Adler were raising all kinds of academic hell at the University of Chicago in the 1930s and 1940s. Hutchins criticized most institutions of higher learning, including ones founded by religious congregations, as places where "chemistry majors cannot speak to economics majors and hardly anyone is speaking to God."

Hutchins and Adler began speaking to God, or at least listening to God, through the works of Plato, Aristotle, and other Great Books authors, including Thomas Aquinas. About 1937, Adler, who died earlier this year, spoke at the New York Catholic Worker on Mott Street. So many people showed up we had to move the meeting to the Franciscan church two blocks away.

Neither before nor since have I heard a more persuasive speaker. At Harvard I had heard a few—surprisingly few—good lecturers. Among the best was Alfred North Whitehead, whose sheer enthusiasm for what he was saying overcame the difficulty of what he was saying. The difference between Whitehead and Adler was that I could understand Adler. He was a beautifully clear, logical, eloquent speaker.

With their "discovery" of Thomism, Hutchins and Adler went on to create an almost Catholic atmosphere at Chicago, though neither man was a Catholic. As one wit put it at the time: "The University of Chicago is a Baptist institution where Jews go to become Catholics." Until a recent weekend, however, I had never met one of these Jewish converts.

That meeting came about during a retreat in Spencer, Massachusetts, at Saint Joseph's Abbey, a monastery operated by the Cistercian Order of the Strict Observance, commonly known as the Trappists. The monk who gave us a series of talks—ninety-one-year-old Father M. Raphael Simon, "still sharp as a tack," as one of his fellow monks put it—recounted that he had been a student of Adler's at Chicago and had converted to Catholicism from Judaism, and that he had given up a promising career as a psychiatrist to join the Trappists. Father Simon's scientific background was evident in his talks that weekend, as well as in his book, *The Glory of Thy People.* He recalled seven or eight other Jewish students at Chicago who had joined the church in the thirties, and remarked that Adler, in his mid-nineties, had become a Catholic.

I had not been on retreat at Spencer since the fifties, shortly after it was founded by a group of monks who had been driven by fire from their abbey in Rhode Island. In the postwar years, there had been a tremendous surge in Trappist vocations among returning veterans and others, inspired largely by the popularity of Thomas Merton's *Seven Storey Mountain.* At the first Mass celebrated at Spencer in 1953, there were 156 monks in residence; two years later 186. Over the years, some left to start daughter houses in Colorado, in Brazil, and in Chile. The current population is about 80, the median age older than in the 1950s, but revealing no serious indication that the contemplative life has lost its appeal. The rate of recruitment is probably better than that of the secular clergy, but this may be because a large percentage of the monks do not go on to priesthood.

Approaching the monastery on a Friday evening, we turned south instead of north and arrived too late for vespers. At compline, a guitar was played and the psalmody was clearly not Gregorian. I thought, "Have the monks gone soft? What's with the pop tunes?" But that was the last of that. From then on we were back in the Middle Ages, where we belonged.

Obviously, a large part of the Trappist appeal is the pull, the charm, of history and of tradition. The psalters we were given were not very useful in following the chant, but they were enough. We sat there in the back of the church, often in the dark, just watching and listening, absorbed by the ambience, the ancient ceremony of prayer and praise, the almost palpable presence of the Holy Spirit. This was the heart of the weekend, a most necessary and useful, strategic retreat into the beauty and chanted wisdom of our Catholic past.

As we drove away on Sunday afternoon, I asked my friend Charlie Bolthrunis, himself a former Dominican friar, "How would you respond to the critics, many of them good religious folk, who say, 'This is all self-indulgence. They make excellent jams and jellies and handsome liturgical vestments, and a few retreatants like ourselves may be entertained and even briefly inspired, but what are they doing to solve, or heal, the pain, the poverty and injustice—the real problems of our wicked world?' How would you respond to that?"

Charlie was at no loss for an answer. He said forthrightly: "One, there are all kinds of flowers in the garden. These men have their own unique vocation, to spend their lives in prayer and praise to God, and to intercede for us who are out here in this 'wicked world.' And two, I cannot understand this lack of confidence in the value and the power of prayer. Our whole Christian faith rests firmly on the power of prayer and the notion that God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—responds to that prayer."

"Charlie," I said, "what do you say we go again next year?" □

John C. Cort *is a former Catholic Worker, a union and antipoverty activist, and a* Commonweal *editor.*

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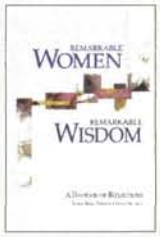

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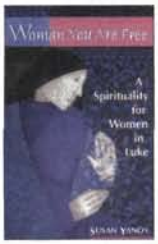

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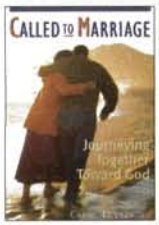

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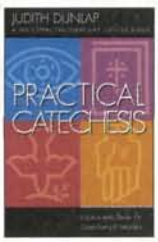

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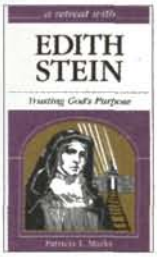

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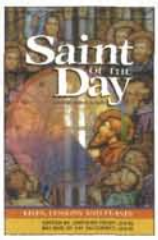

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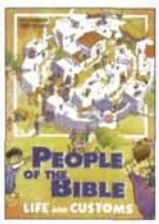

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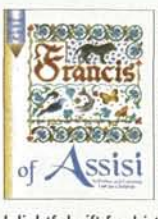

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